THE ENSIGN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • MARCH 2010

Ensign



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Is Technology Interfering with Your Personal Revelation?, p. 16

Learning through Life's Trials, p. 27

Caring for the Poor and Needy in the Latter Days, p. 58



COURTESY OF EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL ART COMPETITION

Faith at the Water's Edge (Exodus 2:3–4), **by Anne Marie Oborn**

"And when [his mother] could not longer hide [Moses], she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink.
"And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him" (Exodus 2:3–4).

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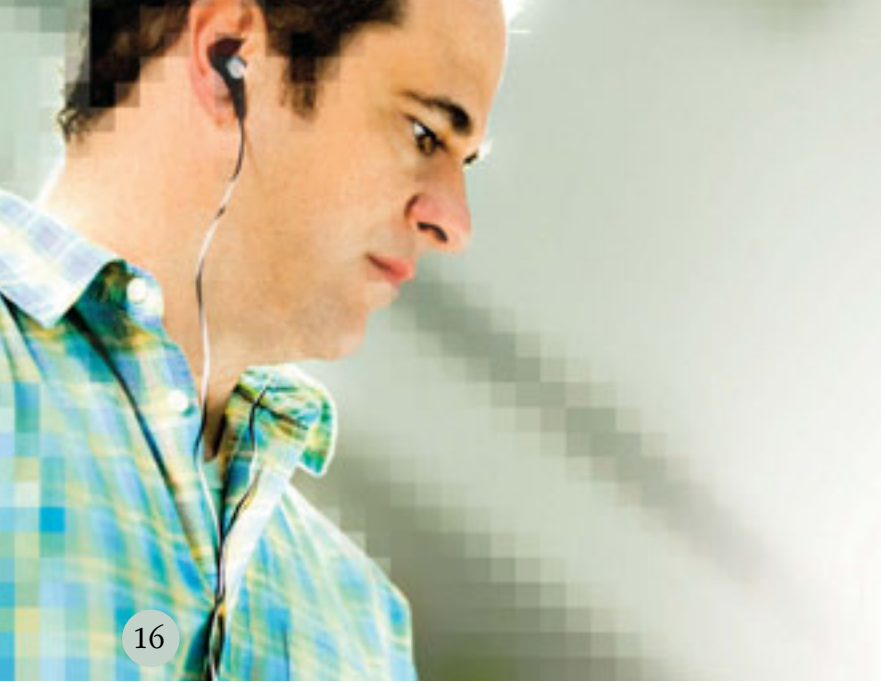
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Ensign

AN OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
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GIVING THANKS



Perhaps you saw the Mormon Messages video "In the Spirit of Thanksgiving" that debuted in November. But if you missed it—or even if you want to watch it again after reading this month's articles about the value of gratitude—go to **youtube.com/mormonmessages**. You can also watch the latest video releases at this site.

HYMN HISTORY



History of Hymns, a program on Mormon Channel, investigates the inception and the evolution of LDS hymns, both music and text. Find out the stories behind your favorite hymns at **radio.lds.org**. Want additional musical edification? Check out Music with a Message, another Mormon Channel program.

HELP YOUR WARD GO GREEN

Looking to minimize the number of handouts, calendars, and directories that are handed out in church meetings? Use your Ward Web Site to convey announcements and reminders instead. Sign up at **lds.org** under "Stake and Ward Web Sites" (on the right side of the page).

DID YOU KNOW?

The Book of Mormon is available in 107 languages (82 languages in full editions, and 25 in selected excerpts). To order a copy of this additional testament of Jesus Christ for you or a friend, visit **www.ldscatalog.com** or **mormon.org**.

DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

In today's world, it can be easy for spouses and families to get caught up in the hustle of work, school, church responsibilities, and other demands. How do you keep up with essential tasks while also prioritizing time to be with those with whom you have covenant relationships? Please send us your ideas and experiences, labeled "Family Priority," and submit by April 16.

We also welcome submissions on other topics showing the gospel of Jesus Christ at work in your life. On each submission, please include your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, and the name of your ward and stake (or branch and district).

Please submit articles through ensign.lds.org, or send them to Ensign Editorial, 50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420, Salt Lake City, UT, 84150-0024, USA. We regret that we cannot acknowledge receipt or return manuscripts. Authors whose work is selected for publication will be notified.

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God gave Joseph Smith courage in his service. Likewise, God has given us more than enough help to banish fear and give us courage, whatever we may face in life.



By President Henry B. Eyring
First Counselor in the First Presidency

MORAL COURAGE



One of the purposes of mortal life is to prove to God that we will keep His commandments when that takes courage. We passed that test in the spirit world. But a third of the hosts of heaven rebelled against the proposal that they be tested in a mortal existence where there was a risk that they would fail.

Before we were born, we knew God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, personally. We could see Them and listen to Them as They taught and encouraged us. Now a veil has been placed over our minds and memories. Satan, the father of lies, has an advantage because we must see the reality of who we are through the eyes of faith, while our bodies make us subject to carnal temptation and to physical weakness.

We have great helps to give us courage in this life. The greatest is the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Because of what He did, sins can be washed away in the waters of baptism. We can renew that blessing when we partake of the sacrament in faith and with a repentant heart.

Spiritual gifts are another help. We receive the Spirit of Christ at birth. That gives us the power to know when a choice before us would lead toward eternal life. The scriptures are a sure guide when we read them with the Holy Ghost as our companion.

The Holy Ghost lets us express thanks and ask for help in prayer with the clarity and confidence we once enjoyed with our Heavenly Father and which we will have when we return to Him. That communication with God helps banish fear from our hearts as it builds faith and love of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

The holy priesthood gives us courage in our service. In its ordinances we receive power to serve God's children and to withstand the influence of evil. When He calls us to serve, we have this promise: "And whoso receiveth you, there I will be also, for I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels

round about you, to bear you up" (D&C 84:88).

The Prophet Joseph Smith in his service had reason to be fearful. But God gave him courage with this assurance of the example of the Master:

"And if thou shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; if thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.

"The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?" (D&C 122:7–8).

God has given us more than enough help to banish fear and give us courage, whatever we may face in life. As we reach out for His help, He can lift us toward that eternal life we seek. ■

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

Jesus Christ, the Master Teacher, often asked questions to encourage people to ponder and apply the principles He taught. . . . His questions prompted thought, soul-searching, and commitment" (*Teaching, No Greater Call* [1999], 68). Consider creating and asking several questions to help individuals understand and apply the truths taught in this message. For example, you could ask, "What help has God given you to banish fear and give you courage?" or "How has God helped you overcome your fears?" Encourage individuals to ponder their answers before responding.

YOUTH

Nobody's Perfect

By Shauna Skoubye

I have always longed to be like Nephi: strictly obedient, extremely faithful, and deeply spiritual. In my eyes Nephi was the supreme example of goodness. Few things appealed to me more than the thought of growing up to be just like him—or at least beginning to possess even a portion of his excellence.

One day I was having a mini crisis, caused by feelings of inadequacy. I had such ambitions and so many goals. But I just didn't seem to be getting anywhere. Through tears of hopelessness, I expressed these feelings to my father. He promptly stood up, walked over to the bookcase, and pulled out one of his copies of the Book of Mormon. Without saying a word, he opened it to 2 Nephi 4 and began reading verse 17.

Chills spread through my body like electricity as I listened to these powerful words: "O wretched man that I am!" My thoughts raced. How could Nephi, my hero and example, say that he was "wretched"? If he was wretched, what did that make me?

Again, the electricity rushed through me as my father read verse 28: "Awake, my soul! No longer droop in sin." It felt to me as though the dark clouds in my mind had parted and cleared away to reveal the

CHILDREN

Gifts That Give Us Courage

President Eyring tells us about several gifts that give us courage. Read each scripture below, and write the name of the gift in the blank. Then match each gift with the picture to the right. Talk with your family about how that gift can give you courage.

1. Acts 22:16 _____

2. 2 Nephi 4:15 _____

3. D&C 59:8–9 _____

4. 2 Nephi 32:5; John 14:26–27 _____

5. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 _____

warmth and splendor of an open blue sky and bright sun. It is impossible to describe the way this verse illuminated my soul. Few verses of scripture have filled me with as much hope, inspiration, and joy as this one did.

In verse 30, Nephi said exactly what I was thinking, only in more eloquent words: "My soul will rejoice in thee, my God, and the rock of my salvation." This verse brought with it feelings of peace and gratitude for the Lord's tender mercy and love.

My dad closed the book and explained that these verses are sometimes called Nephi's psalm. He then gently taught me that even the greatest people on earth are imperfect, and these people must recognize their imperfections or else they would be prideful and, therefore, not great.

I understood. Just because I had weaknesses didn't mean I was incapable of becoming like Nephi.

Nephi said exactly what I was thinking: "My soul will rejoice in thee, my God, and the rock of my salvation."



Recognizing my weaknesses brought me closer to the caliber of Nephi. Nephi was great because, as well as being obedient and faithful, he was humble and willing to admit his faults.

Ever since that experience, I have treasured these words of Nephi. Each time I read them, I experience the same thrills and inspirations as the first time I read them. The verses sing out to me that I am a daughter of God, capable of more than I could ever imagine. I know that if I'm faithful and press forward, untold blessings are in store.

NEPHI WRITING ON THE GOLD PLATES, BY PAUL MANN; ILLUSTRATIONS BY MATT SMITH



Strengthening Faith in God the Father and Jesus Christ through Personal Scripture Study

Teach these scriptures and quotations or, if needed, another principle that will bless the sisters you visit. Bear testimony of the doctrine. Invite those you visit to share what they have felt and learned.

"When I was a new bride, . . . I was invited to a lunch for all of the Relief Society sisters in my ward who had read either the Book of Mormon or a short Church history book. I had become casual in my scripture reading, so I qualified to attend the luncheon by reading the short book because it was easier and took less time. As I was eating my lunch, I had a powerful feeling that though the history book was a good one, I should have read the Book of Mormon. The Holy Ghost was prompting me to change my scripture reading habits. That very day I began to read the Book of Mormon, and I have never stopped. . . . Because I started reading the scriptures daily, I have learned about my Heavenly Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and what I need to do to be like Them. . . .

". . . Every woman can be a gospel doctrine instructor in her home, and every sister in the Church needs gospel knowledge as a leader and teacher. If you have not already developed



the habit of daily scripture study, start now and keep studying in order to be prepared for your responsibilities in this life and in the eternities."[1]

Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president.

"A study of the scriptures will help our testimonies and the testimonies of our family members. Our children today are growing up surrounded by voices urging them to abandon that which is right and to pursue, instead, the pleasures of the world. Unless they have a firm foundation in the gospel of Jesus Christ, a testimony of the truth, and a determination to live righteously, they are susceptible to these influences. It is our responsibility to fortify and protect them."[2]

President Thomas S. Monson.

"We want our sisters to be scholars of the scriptures. . . . You need an acquaintanceship with his eternal truths for your own well being, and for the purposes of teaching your own children and all others who come within your influence."[3]

"We want our homes to be blessed with sister scriptorians—whether you are single or married, young or old, widowed or living in a family. . . . Become scholars of the scriptures—not to put others down, but to lift them up!"[4] ■

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985).

NOTES

1. Julie B. Beck, "My Soul Delighteth in the Scriptures," *Liahona* and *Ensign,* May 2004, 107–9.
2. Thomas S. Monson, "Three Goals to Guide You," *Liahona* and *Ensign,* Nov. 2007, 118.
3. Spencer W. Kimball, "Privileges and Responsibilities of Sisters," *Ensign,* Nov. 1978, 102.
4. Spencer W. Kimball, "The Role of Righteous Women," *Ensign,* Nov. 1979, 102.

HELPS FOR VISITING TEACHING

During your visit, answer questions and share insights using the scriptures. Bear testimony of how scripture study has strengthened your faith. Ask the sister you visit to share how her study of the scriptures has strengthened her home and family.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

John 5:39
2 Timothy 3:14–17
2 Nephi 9:50–51; 31:20; 32:3–5
D&C 138:1–11

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MATTHEW REIER

RECOGNIZING Gospel Light

By Yulia Phares

I would not say that I had no goals before I was baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. But I can say that my life had no clear direction. I sometimes felt as if I were walking in darkness, not really knowing which way to go.

Like most other 19-year-olds in Saint Petersburg, Russia, I hoped to someday get married, have children, and live happily ever after. Still, I wouldn't say that I exactly knew how to achieve this goal—especially the part about living happily ever after.

But Heavenly Father knew. He knew that before I could attain real happiness, I needed to place Him and His Son at the center of my life. I started to learn how to do this not long before my 20th birthday when the missionaries began to teach my family about how to find happiness through living the commandments.



I turned my life to my Heavenly Father and to Jesus Christ. . . . as I place Them at the center of my life, I know I can achieve my goals.

After we met the missionaries, it didn't take long for me to know what to do. I prayed and knew that if I wanted to meet my life's goals, I needed to be baptized a member of Jesus Christ's Church.

Following my baptism, I was ostracized by some friends and family members who couldn't understand why making this choice to follow Heavenly Father's plan was so important to me. Despite this, I was happy. I knew He was comforting me by allowing me to go through these trials with peace.

By the time I turned 21, I had a strong desire to testify of the truthfulness of the gospel and share with others how resolving to live the commandments had changed my life, so I became a missionary. It felt wonderful to share with people what had happened to my life from the time I decided to put the gospel first.

My life has been full of blessings since that time. Eight years ago I was able to enter the temple and reach my goal of getting married. However, instead of only being married, I was sealed to my husband for eternity.

Over the last several years, my goal of becoming a mother has also been fulfilled. I have been blessed with three wonderful sons.

Not long ago my family and I had the opportunity to visit a temple open house. As we walked through the temple, our four-year-old son looked at me and said, "Mom, because you and Dad got married in the temple, our family is going to be together forever."

I feel blessed and humbled to think of the last decade of my life. I am on my way to achieving my goal for a "happily ever after," thanks to the fact that I turned my life to my Heavenly Father and to Jesus Christ. As long as I place Them at the center of my life, I know I can achieve my goals. I know that Heavenly Father and the Savior love us and want to help. ■

Would you like to share how Jesus Christ has touched your life? We welcome accounts of your gospel experiences and insights relating to the Savior's ministry and mission. Possible topics might include the Atonement, grace, healing, hope, or repentance. Please limit submissions to 500 words, label them "We Talk of Christ," and send them to ensign@ldschurch.org.

INSET: CHRIST PORTRAIT BY HEINRICH HOFMANN, COURTESY C. HARRISON CONROY, INC. BACKGROUND PHOTOGRAPH © ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

THE HOLY GHOST TESTIFIES OF TRUTH

The Holy Ghost is the third member of the Godhead. He is a personage of spirit, without a body of flesh and bones (see D&C 130:22). He is often referred to as the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Lord, or the Comforter. He works in perfect unity with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.[1]

As a personage of spirit, the Holy Ghost can be in only one place at a time, but His influence can be everywhere at the same time.[2]

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) taught, "Through the Holy Ghost the truth is woven into the very fibre and sinews of the body so that it cannot be forgotten."[3]

It is also through receiving the Holy Ghost when we repent and are baptized that we may be sanctified. Sanctification is the process of becoming free from sin—pure, clean, and holy—through the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see Moses 6:59–60). We are sanctified as we yield our hearts to God (see Helaman 3:35).

1. The Holy Ghost "witnesses of the Father and the Son" (2 Nephi 31:18). It is only through the power of the Holy Ghost that we can receive a sure testimony of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.[4]





6. We are blessed with gifts of the Spirit through the Holy Ghost. These gifts bless our lives and the lives of those we love and serve. (See 1 Corinthians 12:1–12; Moroni 10:8–18; D&C 46:11–33.)

After I, Nephi, having heard all the words of my father, . . . which he spake by the power of the Holy Ghost, which power he received by faith on the Son of God— . . . I, Nephi, was desirous also that I might see, and hear, and know of these things, by the power of the Holy Ghost, which is the gift of God unto all those who diligently seek him" (1 Nephi 10:17).

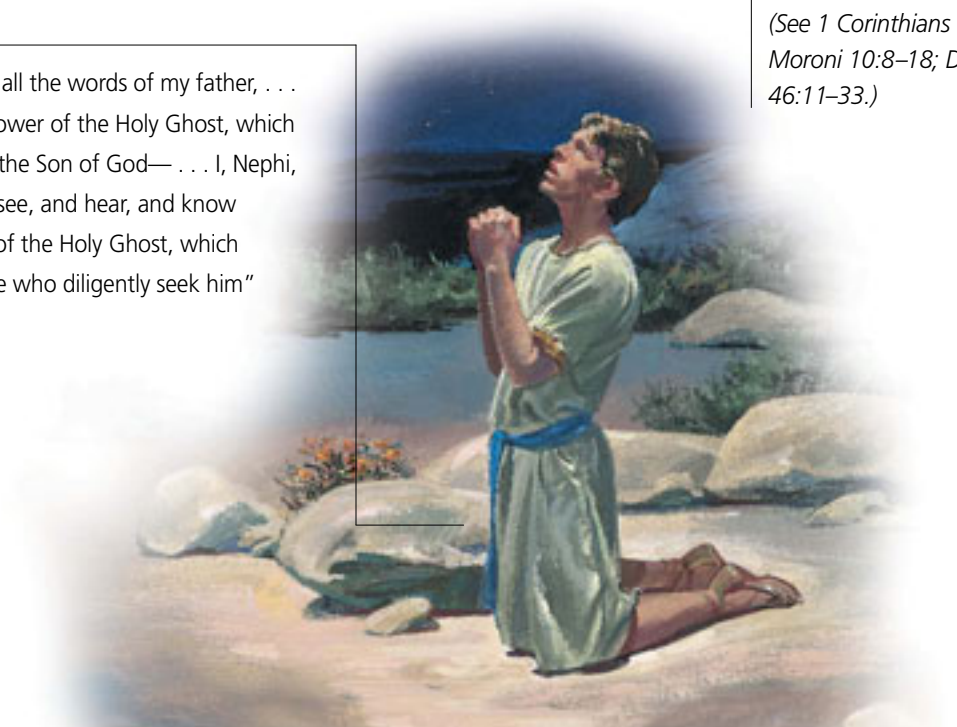


PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY CRAIG DIMOND, DAVID STOKER, WELDEN C. ANDERSEN, DEREK ISRAELSEN, MATTHEW REIER, AND CHRISTINA SMITH; ILLUSTRATION OF NEPHI BY JERRY THOMPSON; *ADAM AND EVE*, BY LONNI CLARKE

2. The Holy Ghost testifies of truth, and it is through His power that we "may know the truth of all things" (Moroni 10:5).



3. The Holy Ghost teaches us all things and brings to our remembrance all we have learned of the Lord and His gospel (see John 14:26).



4. The Holy Ghost will "show unto [us] all things what [we] should do" (2 Nephi 32:5). He can guide us in our decisions and protect us from physical and spiritual danger.



5. As we hunger to know the words of eternal life and allow these words to sink deep into our hearts, the Holy Ghost will open our minds and hearts to greater light and understanding.[5]





7. The Holy Ghost is known as the Comforter because He can fill us with "hope and perfect love" (Moroni 8:26).



8. Adam was the first on earth to be baptized and receive the Holy Ghost (see Moses 6:64–66).



9. Through the power of the Holy Ghost, we become sanctified as we repent, are baptized and confirmed, and strive to obey God's commandments (see Mosiah 4:1–3; 5:1–6). ■

"The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever" (D&C 121:45–46).

NOTES

1. See *True to the Faith* (2004), 81–82; *Preach My Gospel* (2004), 90–91.
2. See *Gospel Principles* (2009), 32.
3. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation,* ed. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 1:48.
4. See 1 Corinthians 12:3; *True to the Faith,* 82.
5. See Enos 1:3; *Preach My Gospel,* 18.

To learn more about our basic beliefs, visit **Mormon.org** (available in many languages).



What Mothers Can Learn from the Savior

Mothers can trust in the Savior's example and modern prophets' revelations for guidance in raising their children and bettering themselves as mothers.

By Amy M. Morgan

Ever since I became a mother, I have wondered what specifics I can learn from the life and teachings of the Savior that apply to my role. Here are a few lessons I've gleaned.

Spend Time with Children

The Savior made time for the children even when He was tired. "Suffer the little children to come unto me" (Mark 10:14). He knew how much children can teach us, and how much they need attention and guidance. Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once taught, "Quality [time] is a direct function of quantity [time]—and mothers, to nurture their children properly, must provide both." Elder Ballard also taught that, "a mother's nurturing love arouses in children, from their earliest days on earth, an awakening of the memories of love and goodness they experienced in their premortal existence."[1]

Pray for Our Children

When the disciples would have sent the little children away, the Lord provided a loving example. "And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them and blessed them" (Mark 10:16). We must seek opportunities to bless our children's lives. This includes priesthood blessings, wholesome activities, loving and righteous examples, and prayer. Think of the strength we can add to our children's resolve to do their best when they know we are praying for them.

Help Our Children Love the Sabbath

The Savior did good works on the Sabbath even when the Pharisees criticized Him for doing so (see John 5:8–16; John 9:14–16). There are many wonderful things we can do on the Sabbath with our children. Attending church and partaking of the sacrament is the most important, but it shouldn't be the only thing. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) has said, "The Sabbath calls for constructive thoughts and acts, and if one merely lounges about doing nothing on the Sabbath, he is breaking it."[2] Some of the things we've tried includes visiting family members, sending letters to missionaries or family, and reading the scriptures as a family. These activities help our children enjoy the Sabbath while honoring the Lord's day.

A mother's life is often focused on the temporal aspects of family life and taking care of the home. It requires extra care to make time to teach and learn in the home.

Teach Faith in Heavenly Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ

The Savior taught that He is the good Shepherd and that His "sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

"He . . . goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice" (John 10:3–4).

When we teach our children to have faith in Him, they will know to follow His teachings and to listen to His voice—whether through the scriptures, modern prophets, or the Holy Ghost.



PHOTO BY BRADLEY SLADE

LEFT: PHOTO BY STEVE BUNDERSON; ABOVE: *THEY BROUGHT THEIR LITTLE CHILDREN*, BY WALTER RANE



As mothers, we need to strive to do our best to fulfill the sacred obligation we have. As the Brethren have taught, we should do our best to stay home and be the strength and support for our children.

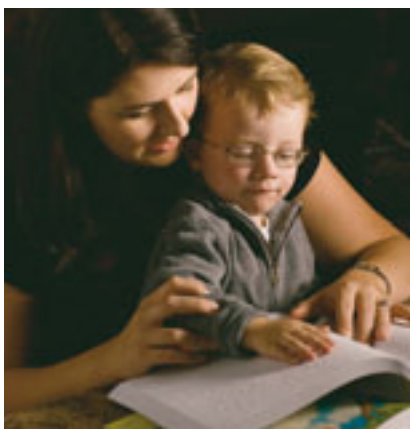


PHOTO BY CHRISTINA SMITH

Quiet Your Fears with Faith in the Lord

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, once said, "If you are helpless, he is not. If you are lost, he is not. If you don't know what to do next, he knows. It would take a miracle, you say? Well, if it takes a miracle, why not?"[3]

Make Time for Teaching and Learning

The Savior taught that there are times when the most important thing we can do is to learn spiritually (see Luke 10:38–42). A mother's life is often focused on the temporal aspects of family life and taking care of the home. It requires extra care to make time to teach and learn in the home. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) said: "Mothers, teach your children the gospel in your own home, at your own fireside. This is the most effective teaching that your children will ever receive. This is the Lord's way of teaching."[4]

Remember a Mother's Calling

The Savior understood and fulfilled His role in Heavenly Father's plan. As mothers, we need to strive to do our best to fulfill the sacred obligation we have. As the Brethren have taught, we should do our best to stay home and be the strength and support for our children.

For some families, however, it may not be possible for mothers to stay home. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said, "There are some women . . . who have to work to provide for the needs of their families. To you I say, do the very best you can. I hope that if you are employed full-time you are doing it to ensure that basic needs are met and not simply to indulge a taste for an elaborate home, fancy cars, and other luxuries. The greatest job that any mother will ever do will be in nurturing, teaching, lifting, encouraging, and rearing her children in righteousness and truth. None other can adequately take her place."[5]

PHOTO BY ROBERT CASEY



PHOTO BY JOHN LUKE

There are many wonderful things we can do on the Sabbath with our children. Attending church and partaking of the sacrament is the most important, but it shouldn't be the only thing.

Even though our lives are less than perfect, we can give our best by following the Savior's example and modern revelations. As President James E. Faust (1920–2007) said, "If you have done your best, which you usually do, your humble offering, whatever it may be, will be acceptable and pleasing to the Lord."[6] ■

NOTES

1. M. Russell Ballard, "The Sacred Responsibilities of Parenthood," *Liahona,* Mar. 2006, 10; *Ensign*, Mar. 2006, 31.
2. Spencer W. Kimball, "The Sabbath—A Delight," *Ensign*, Jan. 1978, 4.
3. Boyd K. Packer, in Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 120.
4. Ezra Taft Benson, "To the Mothers in Zion," from an address given at a fireside for parents, Feb. 22, 1987.
5. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Women of the Church," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 69.
6. James E. Faust, "Instruments in the Hands of God," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 116.



DIGITAL DETACHMENT & Personal Revelation

By Elder Scott D. Whiting
Area Seventy, North America West Area

Ours is a most unusual generation. We are blessed by great and rapid technological advances that make our lives easier and improve our ability to communicate. So quickly do these advances happen that the moment we buy the latest technological device, it is practically obsolete.

We carry wireless telephones that can store hundreds of numbers, are able to take both moving and still pictures, and can access never-ending streams of information from an unseen source. We can play thousands of songs from a device no larger than a credit card. We can surf the Internet at any time of the day or night and quickly move across the intellectual and physical globe in images and information.

Out of such technological advancement come both good and bad. Modern technology, when purely and judiciously used, can help us hasten the work of the Lord and spread the gospel.[1] But an overreliance on technology can also create boredom with lower-tech activities, an attitude that may extend to how we worship God, our Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ. We cannot simply point and click on or download a personal, revelatory relationship with our Heavenly Father.[2] This kind of relationship is built on quiet principles of faith, repentance, and obedience.

For this reason it is vitally important to recognize the risks of digital attachment. Being constantly "plugged in" can drown out the quiet whisperings and subtle impressions of the Holy Spirit, breaking our personal connection with God and making it difficult, if not impossible, to receive personal revelation.



We must guard against becoming so attached to digital devices that we become detached from God.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT CASEY

We Need Personal Revelation

Who among us does not seek for guidance and counsel in important matters? How often do we ask family, friends, or religious leaders to provide us with counsel and direction? While this can be wonderfully helpful at times, is it not even more important to ask our Heavenly Father, who loves us and knows us better than all those we are surrounded by, for inspired direction and guidance? He will never lead us astray.



I can personally testify that every major decision I have made in my life and many more minor decisions have been a result of promptings I have felt from the Holy Ghost. These include my decision to prepare for and serve a full-time mission, my selection of an eternal companion, my career pursuits, my decision to pursue additional education even though it wasn't convenient or economical at the time, and my quest toward greater righteousness. These types of decisions are important to all of us, and we need our Father's help as we strive to return to Him. We cannot afford to let anything, no matter how attractive, distract us from the personal revelation He wants to give us.

Desire Personal Revelation

The first step in receiving personal revelation is desiring it. Revelation is rarely given to those not seeking it, and sometimes when it does come that way, it does not have a lasting effect. For instance, Laman and Lemuel had the miraculous experience of seeing an angel of the Lord, yet they rejected the Lord's promptings. Nephi later reproached his brothers: "Ye have seen an angel, and he spake unto you; yea, ye have heard his voice from time to time; and he hath spoken unto you in a still small voice, but ye were past feeling, that ye could not feel his words" (1 Nephi 17:45).

This state of being "past feeling" is a perilous position to be in. Can you imagine being faced with the eternally significant choices we face in life without being able to feel the promptings of the Holy Ghost? Laman and Lemuel provide a sobering example of the consequences of being in that state.

Nephi, on the other hand, had "great

We cannot simply point and click on or download a personal, revelatory relationship with our Heavenly Father.



desires to know of the mysteries of God" (1 Nephi 2:16). Nephi sought for the blessings of personal revelation, was worthy of them, and as a result had many great and wonderful truths revealed unto him—truths that not only blessed his family and his people but that also continue to bless us today.

Study and Ponder

Once the desire has been kindled, how can you and I access the opened heavens? A recent example of canonized modern-day revelation provides a pattern.

The revelation we have today as Doctrine and Covenants 138 came to President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) the day before he spoke at the October 1918 general conference. A close look at this great revelation regarding the Savior's visit to the spirits of the dead is instructive to those seeking their own divine communications. The first few verses of this revelation read in part:

"I sat in my room pondering over the scriptures;

"And reflecting upon the great atoning sacrifice that was made by the Son of God, for the redemption of the world;

"And the great and wonderful love made manifest by the Father and the Son in the coming of the Redeemer into the world;

"That through his atonement, and by obedience to the principles of the gospel, mankind might be saved" (D&C 138:1–4).

How often have you made the time for pondering such wonderful things? If you are like most people, you are sometimes uncomfortable being alone with your thoughts. Most people would rather plug in some headphones than allow their minds to contemplate the sacred.

But pondering the sacred things of God is necessary if we are to receive personal revelation, and pondering is best done in an unplugged environment. We need to be able to hear the acoustic subtleties of the Spirit. Perhaps no greater counsel was given than that recorded in Psalm 46:10: "Be still, and know that I am God."

President Joseph F. Smith received his revelation by being still and pondering the scriptures. A similar pattern unfolds in the events leading up to one of the most important revelatory moments of all mankind, when the young boy Joseph Smith read James 1:5. The Prophet recorded that "never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again" (Joseph Smith—History 1:12).

Joseph was learning the powerful connection between the study of the scriptures and then pondering them as essential precursors to receiving personal revelation. It was a pattern he would perfect to the blessing and edification of us all.



Joseph Smith learned the powerful connection between the study of the scriptures and then pondering them as essential precursors to receiving personal revelation.

This state of being "past feeling" is a perilous position to be in. Laman and Lemuel provide a sobering example.

LEFT: *NEPHI REBUKING HIS REBELLIOUS BROTHERS*, BY ARNOLD FRIBERG; RIGHT, ABOVE: *JOSEPH SMITH SEEKS WISDOM FROM THE BIBLE*, BY DALE KILBOURN



Fast and Pray for Answers

Prayer is another crucial component of receiving revelation. The instructive words of Alma witness how he received his own testimony through personal revelation. He writes:

"Do ye not suppose that I know of these things myself? Behold, I testify unto you that I do know that these things whereof I have spoken are true. And how do ye suppose that I know of their surety?

"Behold, I say unto you they are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit; and this is the spirit of revelation which is in me" (Alma 5:45–46).

The scriptures often admonish us to "knock" or "ask" and tell us it shall be given unto us.



The scriptures admonish us on numerous occasions to "knock" or "ask" and tell us it shall be given unto us. Jesus Christ Himself promised that "whatsoever things ye shall ask the Father in my name shall be given unto you.

"Therefore, ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for he that asketh, receiveth; and unto him that knocketh, it shall be opened" (3 Nephi 27:28–29).

Keep the Commandments

To successfully draw upon the power of personal revelation, we must be obedient to the laws of God. Always remember that "there is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world,

JACOB PRAYING, BY ROBERT T. BARRETT

upon which all blessings are predicated—

"And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated" (D&C 130:20–21). Personal revelation is predicated upon personal obedience.

Personal Revelation Is for Everyone

These examples of ancient and modern prophets are powerful, but what of us, those not foreordained to such revelation-intense assignments in the Lord's kingdom? Can we also participate in this revelatory process? Revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith as he was translating John 5:29 gives this powerful instruction:

"For thus saith the Lord—I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.

"Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory.

"And to them [you and me] will I reveal all mysteries, yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old, and for ages to come, will I make known unto them the good pleasure of my will concerning all things pertaining to my kingdom.

"Yea, even the wonders of eternity shall they know, and things to come will I show them, even the things of many generations.

"And their wisdom shall be great, and their understanding reach to heaven" (D&C 76:5–9).

As though these promises were not enough, the Lord also says that "every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am" (D&C 93:1). These blessings are promised to all who qualify, not just those in leadership positions.

Avoid Digital Distractions

While modern technological advancements can enhance the work of the Lord and bless us and our families, we must be careful not to fall victim to their destructive side. We must not only avoid the base and degrading content some sources contain, but we must also recognize when electronic distractions keep us from quieter, more significant uses of our time. We must guard against becoming so attached to digital devices that we become detached from God.

Sometimes the most productive "point and click" application is that of pointing our finger at the power button and clicking our digital devices off.

Let us recognize the need for personal revelation; develop the desire for these divine communications; seek revelation through scripture study, prayer, and pondering upon the mercies of God; and obey His commandments. Finally, we must recognize that revelation is available to anyone who is worthy and asks God in faith, in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ.

I know these things are true. I know it because of my own experiences with personal revelation. I know the whisperings of the Holy Ghost, for I have heard them and felt them. I know God loves us and desires to bless us with His word and knowledge if we will but seek it. ■

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University–Hawaii on February 5, 2008.

Sometimes the most productive "point and click" application is that of pointing our finger at the power button and clicking our digital devices off.



NOTES

1. See M. Russell Ballard, "Sharing the Gospel Using the Internet," *Liahona,* June 2008, N1; *Ensign,* July 2008, 58.
2. See Boyd K. Packer, "Personal Revelation: The Gift, the Test, and the Promise," *Liahona,* June 1997, 8; *Ensign,* Nov. 1994, 59.

WHEN THINGS SEEMED WRONG

I was trying to live the gospel. So why did my life take a turn for the worse?

By Lin Si-Chia



It started when I lost the Book of Mormon "my" missionary, Sister High, had given me more than five years earlier. I knew I could obtain another one, but my copy was full of my own markings and cross-references. Tucked between its pages were cherished quotes, a heartwarming note from a friend, and a copy of my patriarchal blessing. Although I looked and looked, the book was nowhere to be found. I couldn't believe I had been so careless.

Shortly after this incident, I was let go from one of my jobs. My income was now cut in half. I had promised my parents I would pay my own way through college. How was I going to afford to keep going to school?

I had been keeping the commandments to the best of my ability; why were things going so badly? Friends at school didn't pass on the chance to rub it in. One said, "You should cut back on how often you attend church. You can save bus fare." Another said, "Why don't you take a break from church for a month or two? You might find out that you don't notice much of a difference."

For a moment, their comments made sense. I started to wonder if my life *would* be better without the Church.

I went back to my dorm room, where I saw a picture of my family taken during Chinese New Year. I thought about how much I love them and how happy they make me. And I thought about my Heavenly Father, whom I love and who loves me. I realized maybe I

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEVE KROPP

needed to focus on what I had rather than what I lacked. Still, I wondered how I was going to get through these trials.

A short time later, I confided my feelings to my institute teacher, Sister Ou, who said, "Many members have experienced a phase when the 'all is well' period of being a new convert ends and you begin to face the trials of faith. The scriptures say, 'Nevertheless the Lord seeth fit to chasten his people; yea, he trieth their patience and their faith' (Mosiah 23:21)."

"So what should I do?" I asked.

"Study the scriptures even more diligently, and pray even more earnestly," she said. "True faith comes when you have trials and pain. Your faith will grow, you will progress, and your testimony will be strengthened."

I decided to follow her advice and put my faith in God. I tried to do as Alma 38:5 teaches: "As much as ye shall put your trust in God even so much ye shall be delivered out of your trials, and your troubles, and your afflictions, and ye shall be lifted up at the last day."

As it turned out, I found another job—one that was better than my previous one. Better yet, I found my copy of the Book of Mormon.

I learned that our disappointments, sorrows, and dark hours are to help us grow. They can lead us to much joy if, as Sister Ou taught me, we put our faith and trust in a loving Heavenly Father. How grateful I am to have a reaffirmed testimony that the Church and gospel are true. ■



The newness of being a member of the Church had worn off, and I found myself facing a trial of faith. Fortunately, my institute teacher helped me see the joy that lay ahead.

WHY PAY FAST OFFERINGS?

Rebecca Alison Titz, a young adult from Germany who now attends the Winterthur Ward in Switzerland, has a testimony of fasting and of the blessings that come from paying a generous fast offering. Rebecca grew up seeing her parents pay fast offerings, and when she started to earn her own salary, she began contributing on her own.



She says, "There have been times when I could pay a generous fast offering." And in those times she says, "I was never hungry in body or spirit." She explains that feelings of hunger from fasting pass quickly, but the blessings of spiritual nourishment that come from helping others are long lasting—even eternal.

Rebecca has always tried to contribute a fast offering freely. "I've never had a problem giving it," she says. "I have never thought, 'I could use this money somewhere else.' I have always thought, 'This is helping people who need it.'"



One of Rebecca's friends, Jessica Schwabe of the Halberstadt Branch in Hannover, Germany, adds: "Paying fast offerings gives fasting more meaning; it makes it all come together. Fast offerings are a part of fasting not for ourselves but for others, for people in need." ■



By Elder Russell M. Nelson
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

NEITHER TRUST IN THE ARM OF FLESH

Even though you may be learned in the ways of the world, don't forget the power of God.

In the preface of the Doctrine and Covenants, we learn about the limitations of the arm of flesh: "The weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones, that man should not counsel his fellow man, neither trust in the arm of flesh" (D&C 1:19). To rephrase that warning: even though you may be learned in the ways of the world, don't forget the power of God.

My medical school classmates and I learned that lesson in an unforgettable way more than 30 years ago. Our experience took place in the little town of Manzanillo, on Mexico's western coast. The year was 1978. The members of our 1947 graduating class, along with our spouses, were attending a medical symposium.

One evening after the scientific sessions had been completed, one of the doctors suddenly became seriously ill. Without warning, he began to lose massive amounts of blood from his stomach. Totally stunned, we surrounded him, watching life's precious blood flow from him. There we were, medical specialists skilled in various disciplines, including surgeons, anesthesiologists, and internists, each with wisdom gained through more than 30 years of experience. What could we do? The nearest hospital was in Guadalajara, more than 100 mountainous miles (160 km) away. It was night. No planes could fly. Blood transfusions were out of the question because of lack of equipment. All of our combined knowledge could not be mobilized to stop his hemorrhage. We were totally without the facilities or equipment needed to save the life of our beloved friend.

Our stricken colleague, a faithful Latter-day Saint, was well aware of his plight. Ashen and pale, he whispered a request for a priesthood blessing. Several of us held the Melchizedek Priesthood. We responded to his request immediately. I was asked to seal the anointing. The Spirit dictated that he be blessed to the end that the bleeding would stop and that he would continue to live and return to his home. That blessing was administered in the name of the Lord.

By the next morning, his condition had improved. Miraculously, the bleeding had stopped. His blood pressure had returned to normal. In a couple of days, he was able to return to his home. Unitedly, we thanked the Lord for this most remarkable blessing.

The lesson we learned was simple: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5). We experienced it firsthand. This doctrine, taught repeatedly in the scriptures,[1] had now become our sure knowledge.

Please do not misunderstand me, brothers and sisters. Of course we need to prepare for worthy work to do. Yes, we do need to do our work well, whatever we choose to do in life. We need to be able to render significant service. And before we can achieve that competence, we need an education. With us, education is



a religious responsibility. The glory of God *really* is intelligence (see D&C 93:36).

But the learning of man has its limitations. And sometimes, as in our circumstance in rural Mexico, the combined learning of many experts cannot be applied when we need it most. We have to place our trust in the Lord.

That experience in Mexico taught us another important lesson. It pertains to our ultimate priorities and highest destinies as mortal beings. We learned that a doctor's ultimate destination is not in the hospital. For a lawyer, it is not in the courtroom. For a jet pilot, it is not in the cockpit of a Boeing 747. Each person's chosen occupation is only a means to an end; it is not an end in itself.

The end for which each of you should strive is to be the person that you can become—the person who God wants you to be. The day will come when your professional career will end. The career that you will have labored so hard to achieve—the work that will have supported you and your family—will one day be behind you.

Then you will have learned this great lesson: much more important than what you do for a living is what kind of person you become. When you leave this frail existence, what you have become will matter most. Attributes such as "faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, [and] diligence" (D&C 4:6) will all be weighed in the Lord's balance.

From time to time, ask yourself these questions: "Am I ready to meet my Maker?" "Am I worthy of all the blessings He has in store for His faithful children?" "Have I received my endowment and sealing ordinances of the temple?" "Have I remained faithful to my covenants?" "Have I qualified for the greatest of all God's blessings—the blessing of eternal life?" (see D&C 14:7).

Much more important than what you do for a living is what kind of person you become. Attributes such as "faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, [and] diligence" will all be weighed in the Lord's balance.

Those who cherish their faith in God—those who trust in Him—have been given this scriptural promise: "Let no man glory in man, but rather let him glory in God. . . . These shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever" (D&C 76:61–62). May that be the ultimate destiny for each of us. ■

From a Brigham Young University commencement address delivered on April 23, 2009.

NOTE

1. See, for example, Proverbs 11:28; Jeremiah 17:5; Romans 8:1; 2 Nephi 4:34–35; 2 Nephi 28:31; D&C 1:19–23.

For the full text of the address in English, see **speeches.byu.edu**

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT CASEY



By Elder David E. LeSueur
Area Seventy
North America Southwest Area

ACCEPTABLE SERVICE

He walked into a little classroom in the Philippines to be interviewed in preparation for receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood. I didn't know how old he was, but even the older members of the branch called him *Tatay* (father).

When I asked whether he would be able to understand my English, he smiled warmly and replied with careful diction, "Yes, I will."

After our interview I asked him if there was any reason he should not be ordained to the priesthood. After a moment he said, "Perhaps I should not receive the priesthood."

Puzzled, I asked, "What do you mean?"

"I have only one tooth," he replied. "I know I don't look very good to receive the priesthood. It is all right if you tell me I cannot have the priesthood."

We sat for a moment while I pondered his comment, tears welling up in my eyes. Then I put my hand on his hand and told him that I had seen many wonderful priesthood holders who had lost their hair, but he had beautiful, thick black hair. I also told him of priesthood holders who had only one ear or one eye, but he had both of his eyes and ears.

I then told him of a friend of mine who had lost his arm to cancer. When that brother had prayed in our home and had asked Heavenly Father to bless my wife and children, I knew he was a great servant of the Lord. I told Tatay how this friend had placed his only hand on the head of a little girl to bless her because she was dying and that I had felt the power of the priesthood that day.

This elderly Filipino smiled and said, "I hope my service to God will also be acceptable."

We are all flawed in some significant way, and we all know the feelings of inadequacy that come with a new calling. But God accepts the humblest offering of the humblest Saint, and each of us can make a difference. We need not be embarrassed or ashamed; we need only give our best effort to the Lord. In turn He will bless us and magnify us and, in a marvelous way, make us whole. ■



ON THE LORD'S ERRAND

Some of you may be shy by nature or consider yourselves inadequate to respond affirmatively to a calling. Remember that this work is not yours and mine alone. It is the Lord's work, and when we are on the Lord's errand, we are entitled to the Lord's help."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Duty Calls," *Ensign,* May 1996, 44.

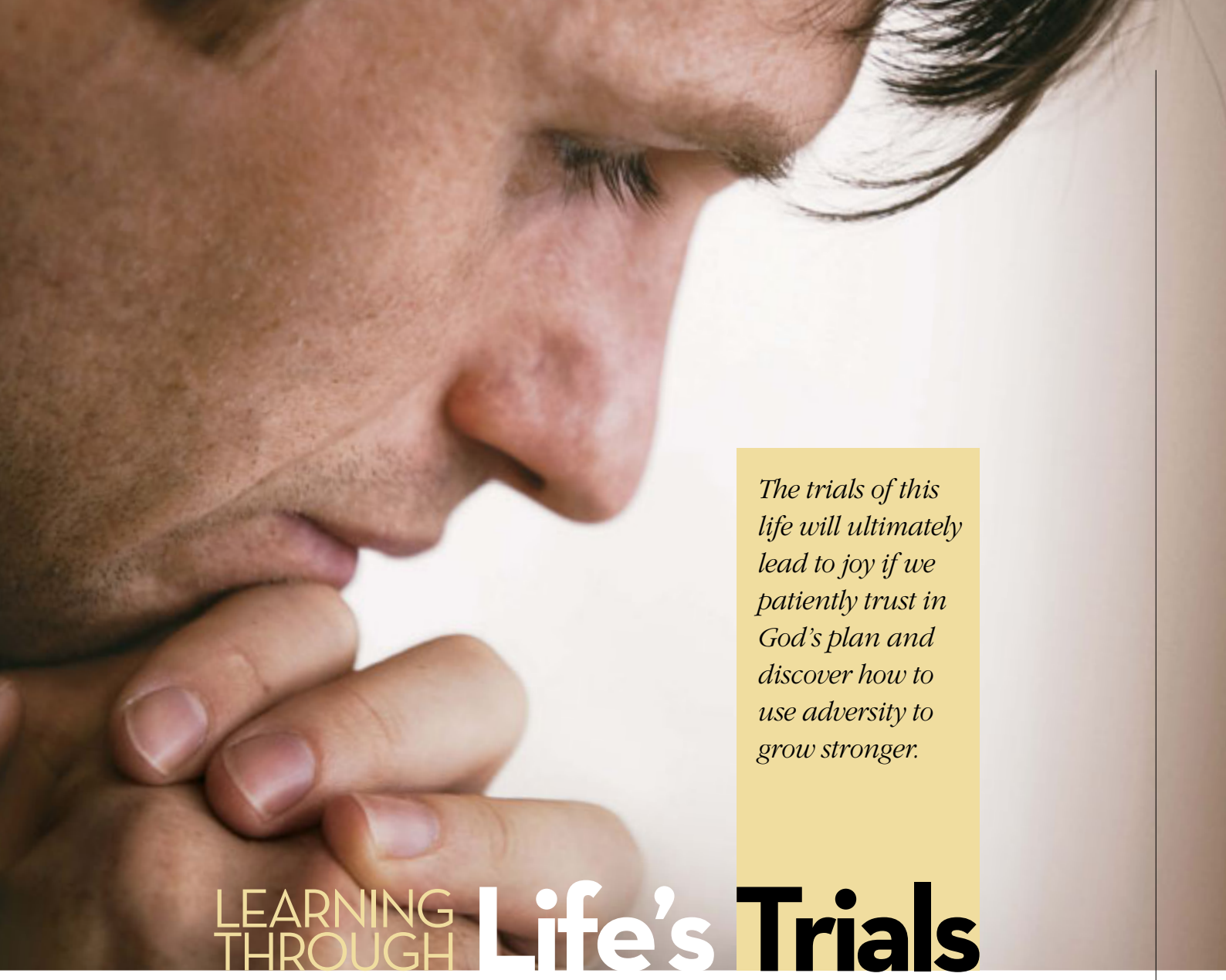


MAGNIFYING YOUR CALLING

We can be assured that our service is acceptable to God as we magnify our callings in the Church. President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988), a counselor in the First Presidency, said magnifying our callings requires that we:

- Have a motivating desire to magnify our callings.
- Search and ponder the words of eternal life.
- Pray about our callings.
- Live the gospel.
- Diligently perform the service we are called to render.

From Marion G. Romney, "Magnifying One's Calling in the Priesthood," *Ensign,* July 1973, 89, 90.



The trials of this life will ultimately lead to joy if we patiently trust in God's plan and discover how to use adversity to grow stronger.

LEARNING THROUGH Life's Trials

By Larry Richman

I've learned that the way I respond to trials can have a great effect on whether they become roadblocks in my life or expressways to learning and growth. When I anguish over difficulties, the experiences only serve to weigh me down. But remembering that these trials are part of the great plan of happiness helps me to see them as opportunities to grow and learn.

As children of a loving God, we accepted our Father's plan to obtain a physical body, gain earthly experience, and qualify to return to His presence and enjoy eternal life. In fact, we "shouted for joy" at the chance to participate in this "plan of happiness" (Alma 42:8, 16). Here on earth, there is a lot of joy, but there are also times of trial, misfortune, and grief.

A common misunderstanding among members of the Church is that if we strive with all our might to live the commandments, nothing bad will happen to us. We may believe if we are married in the temple, our marriage will automatically be heaven on earth, or if we live the Word of Wisdom, we will never get sick. But the truth is that bad things may happen to the best of people. The consequences of good and bad actions will come, but they do not always come immediately, and they may not even come in this life.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JERRY GARNS



Much suffering comes as a direct result of **sin.**

When we use our agency to disregard the commandments of God, we follow Satan's plan of misery rather than God's plan of happiness.

Origins of Adversity

Much suffering comes as a direct result of sin. When we use our agency to disregard the commandments of God, we follow Satan's plan of misery rather than God's plan of happiness.

Other trials come as a result of unwise choices. For example, many people are burdened with financial debt because they choose to make purchases on credit rather than delay purchases until they can afford to pay in cash.

Yet other challenges come as a natural result of mortality and the world we live in. We are mortals with bodies that will age and may become ill or injured.

Degree of Fault for Problems in Life

As mortals, we try to assign fault for every situation. Often, we judge ourselves harshly, concluding that problems occur because of something we did wrong or because we failed to do something to prevent them.[1]

As we consider the degree of our personal fault for the tribulations in our lives, it may be helpful to think of a continuum with sin at one end and adversity at the other.[2]

Our degree of fault is high at the end of the spectrum marked as *sin*. We should accept responsibility for problems caused by sin by repenting and continually striving to do better. However, as we continue down the spectrum, our fault drops to zero at the end marked by *adversity*, where we may bear no responsibility at all. These trials may come to us regardless of any conscious action on our part. If we blame ourselves for things that are not our fault, we make a bad situation worse by seeing ourselves as bad people who deserve bad things.

It is difficult to judge our level of responsibility for problems that fall between these two ends of the spectrum. In these cases, it may be unproductive to try to establish blame because it may cause us to lose focus on the very reason for the trial.

The Purposes of Adversity

Apostle Orson F. Whitney (1855–1931) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained: "No pain that we suffer, no trial that we experience is wasted. It ministers to our education, to the development of such qualities as patience, faith, fortitude and humility. All that we suffer and all that we endure, especially when we endure it patiently, builds up our characters, purifies our hearts, expands our souls, and makes us more tender and charitable, more worthy to be called the children of God . . . and it is through sorrow and suffering, toil and tribulation, that we gain the education that we come here to acquire."[3]

Trials give us opportunities to show the Lord and ourselves that we will be faithful. We can choose to feel sorry for ourselves and ask, "Why me?" or we can grow from our trials, increase our faith in the Lord, and ask, "How can I be faithful in the midst of this trial?" We can let adversity break us down and make us bitter, or we can let it refine us and make us stronger. We can allow adversity to lead us to drift away from the things that matter most, or we can use it as a stepping-stone to grow closer to things of eternal worth.

Spiritual growth can often be achieved more readily by trials and adversity than by comfort and tranquility. Trials can teach us that faith in God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ is the source of inner strength. President David O. McKay (1873-1970) recounted the testimony of one of the survivors of the ill-fated Martin handcart company, who said: "We suffered beyond anything you can imagine and many died of exposure and starvation, but . . . [we] came through with the absolute knowledge that God lives for we became acquainted with Him in our extremities."[4]

Benefitting from Adversity

Since adversity will come to us all, consider the following ideas to help face trials and benefit from them.

- **Rely on Christ**

One of the purposes of trials is to help us come to know Christ, understand His teachings in our minds, feel them in our hearts, and live them in our lives. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explains that God loves us perfectly and "would not require [us] to experience a moment more of difficulty than is absolutely needed for [our] personal benefit or for that of those [we] love."[5] President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) once remarked: "Sometimes when [we] are going through the most severe tests, [we] will be nearer to God than [we] have any idea."[6]

When we turn to Christ, we will not only find the comfort we seek, but in so doing we will also gain an increased testimony of the reality of the Savior and His Atonement, which can heal all suffering. We often speak of the Atonement in terms of relief from sin and guilt. But the Atonement is more. Alma taught that Christ suffered pains, afflictions, and temptations of every kind so He could be filled with mercy and know how to succor His people according to their infirmities (see Alma 7:11–12).

The Atonement can heal the effects of all pain and affliction in mortality.[7] When suffering is our fault, we can be cleansed through repentance, and "after all we can do," the Atonement can compensate for the consequences of our sins. It can also compensate for the harmful effects of our ignorance or neglect, the pain caused by the willful actions of others, and the suffering that comes as a result of living in a natural world.

God lets us have difficult days, months, or lives so we can grow from these experiences. I believe that the specific challenges I have faced in my life were the specific ways I had to learn the lessons I needed to learn. I believe I am the man I am today *because* of the trials I've experienced, not in *spite* of them.



Other trials come as a result of **unwise choices.**

For example, many people are burdened with financial debt because they choose to make purchases on credit rather than delay purchases until they can afford to pay in cash.



Yet other challenges come as a natural result of **mortality** and the world we live in. We are mortals with bodies that will age and may become ill or injured.

Elder Richard G. Scott taught that "the Lord is intent on [our] personal growth and development. . . . Progress is accelerated when [we] willingly allow Him to lead [us] through every growth experience [we] encounter. . . . If [we] question [every unpleasant challenge], . . . [we] make it harder for the Lord to bless [us]."[8] But if we center our hearts and minds on the Lord's will, we will gain more happiness in the journey and more fulfillment in life.

• Rely on Others

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught, "God does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another person that he meets our needs."[9] We need to allow other people to be instruments in the Lord's hands to help us through the challenges in life.

• Let Adversity Make You a Better Person

A woman in my stake fought a battle with cancer. Although she endured pains and heartache that few people understood, she remained cheerful and optimistic. [10]

She wrote her own obituary, which, in part, reads: "Today at the young age of 33 I left this mortal existence to a holier sphere. I was born . . . to wonderful parents . . . who taught me to live life well. . . . We have three sweet children who I will miss greatly. At the young age of 29, I was introduced to something called cancer. Cancer was my great adversary, but I have learned that in this life our enemies can become our choicest friends; the secret is in learning what to do with the conflict."

We are not always healed from pain and sickness. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve has said, "Sometimes we are 'healed' by being given strength or understanding or patience to bear the burdens placed upon us."[11]

• Live with Integrity

When faced with seemingly insurmountable challenges, we may be tempted to take the easy way out. Although my friend Cody (name has been changed) has felt same-gender attractions his entire life, he doesn't listen to the world's view that he was born that way and has no accountability for his actions. He knows that the commandments and blessings of the gospel are as real and relevant to him as to anyone else. Cody is living his life with integrity to the principles he knows to be true. He knows that if he lives faithfully, all the blessings of the gospel will be his, either in this life or in the next. He knows that his present trials don't determine who he really is, but his responses to them will influence who he will become.

Yielding to adversity makes us weaker. Keeping the commandments—no matter how trying—makes us stronger and helps us overcome every challenge in life. Through faith

and obedience, we qualify for the divine spiritual guidance we need to guide us along unknown roads.

• Be Patient

We live in a world of instant gratification. We want fast food, quick loans, and instant solutions to our problems. However, the Lord may ask us to show our faith by enduring some problems patiently. Today, we may not be able to grasp all the reasons for our challenges or the opportunities they will give us to grow. We may have to learn line upon line. As we patiently endure in righteousness, He may reveal to us greater understanding about our trials and the purpose of them in our lives.

• Keep an Eternal Perspective

Some of the challenges we experience in this life are conditions of mortality that will not continue into the next life. President Brigham Young (1801–1877) taught: "We talk about our trials and troubles here in this life; but suppose that you could see yourselves thousands and millions of years after you have proved faithful to your religion during the few short years in this time, and have obtained eternal salvation and a crown of glory in the presence of God? Then look back upon your lives here, and see the losses, crosses, and disappointments, the sorrows . . . ; you would be constrained to exclaim, 'but what of all that? Those things were but for a moment, and we are now here. We have been faithful during a few moments in our mortality, and now we enjoy eternal life and glory, with power to progress in all the boundless knowledge and through the countless stages of progression, enjoying the smiles and approbation of our Father and God, and of Jesus Christ our elder brother.' "[12]

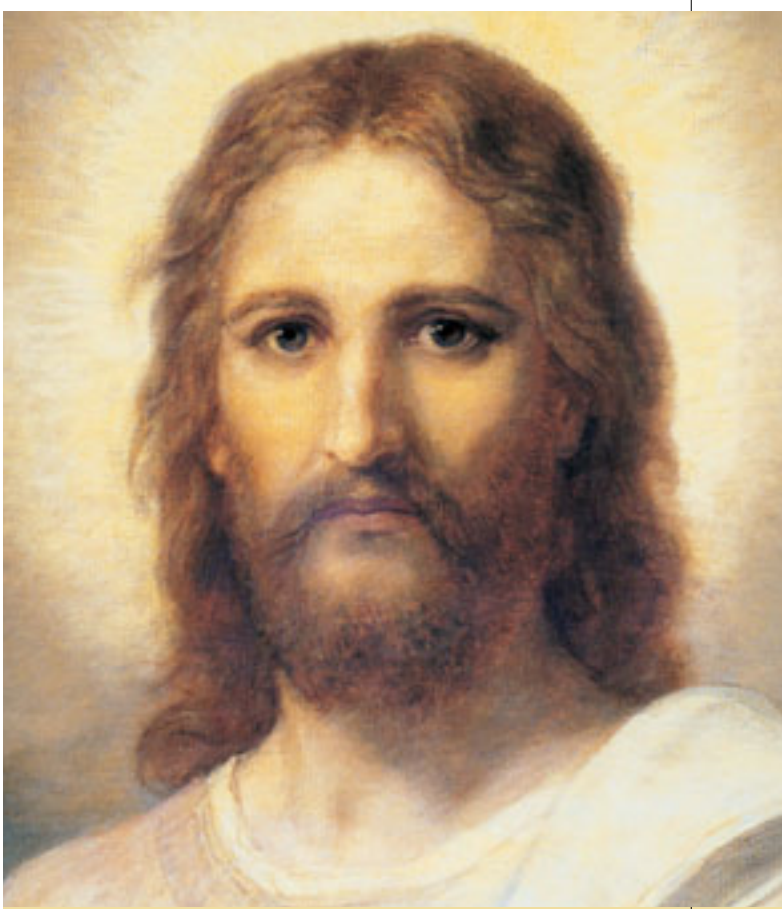
Facing Adversity

If we turn to Christ with faith and patience, we can have the strength we need to face adversity. The doctrines of the restored gospel give us an eternal perspective that provides hope and courage to bear all of life's trials. Each of us has the strength to bear our challenges in life because of who we are, who God is, and who we are together ■

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University—Idaho on October 30, 2007.

NOTES

1. See Richard G. Scott, "Trust in the Lord," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 17.
2. See Bruce C. Hafen, "Beauty for Ashes: The Atonement of Jesus Christ," *Ensign*, Apr. 1990, 10.
3. Quoted by Spencer W. Kimball in *Faith Precedes the Miracle* (1972), 98. Also, Brigham Young taught, "Every trial and experience you have passed through is necessary for your salvation," *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young*, 262.
4. Quoted by David O. McKay, *Relief Society Magazine*, Jan. 1948, 8.
5. "Trust in the Lord," 17.
6. Harold B. Lee, in Conference Report, Munich Germany Area Conference 1973, 114.
7. Bruce C. Hafen, "Beauty for Ashes," *Ensign*, Apr. 1990, 7–13; see also Dallin H. Oaks, "He Heals the Heavy Laden," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 6–9.
8. Richard G. Scott, "Finding Joy in Life," *Ensign*, May 1996, 25.
9. Spencer W. Kimball, "Small Acts of Service," *Ensign*, Dec. 1974, 5.
10. See Joanne D. Smith, "Annette's Halo," *Ensign*, Sept. 1991, 71–73.
11. "He Heals the Heavy Laden," 7–8. See also Mosiah 24:13–15.
12. Brigham Young, in *Deseret News*, Nov. 9, 1859, 1.



One purpose of trials is to help us come to know **Christ,** understand His teachings in our minds, feel them in our hearts, and live them in our lives.

For the full text in English, see **web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches**.



By Elder Paul B. Pieper
Of the Seventy

Trials and Testimony

I testify that as we turn to our testimony of Him in times of crisis, we can find the strength to overcome all that we are asked to endure.

While in exile on the island of Patmos off the coast of present-day Turkey, the Apostle John received a visit from the risen Lord. In his vision, John was shown the trials the former-day Saints were facing in Asia and the trials that Latter-day Saints would face in our time. He saw that the war that began in heaven continued in his day and would persist in our day (see Revelation 12).

John was also privileged to see in his vision those who would remain faithful through their tribulations to the end. Of these he said, "And they overcame him [the devil and his temptations] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the *word of their testimony"* (Revelation 12:11; emphasis added). John learned that reliance on a personal testimony of the Savior and His gospel is essential in order to remain faithful during times of testing and crisis.

Each person who accepts the restored gospel of Jesus Christ receives a testimony by the power of the Holy Ghost that our Heavenly Father lives, Jesus Christ is the Savior, Joseph Smith is the prophet of the Restoration, the Book of Mormon is true, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is God's only true and living church on the earth today. This testimony causes us to change our lives and chart a new course, conforming our lives to Heavenly Father's will and commandments. As we live the commandments, we receive blessings and additional spiritual witnesses that the doctrines and commandments are true.

When we have fully repented, we are privileged to enter into the waters of baptism and be cleansed from all of our sins. We then receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, which gives us a more powerful spiritual witness of the correctness of our path. The continuing witness of the Spirit becomes the testimony that anchors us to Jesus Christ and His restored gospel.

For a time after baptism, our spiritual experiences are new and fresh in our minds. We feel the

LEFT: *JOHN ON PATMOS*, BY HAROLD COPPING, © PROVIDENCE COLLECTION.COM; ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
ABOVE, RIGHT: *MASTER THE TEMPEST IS RAGING*, BY WALTER RANE; COURTESY CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM.

influence of the Spirit with us and the power and strength of our newfound testimony. Time passes, and the truths we have found become a routine part of our lives. We attend church, partake of the sacrament, and listen to lessons. We are comfortable with our lives and all is well. But then it happens. Something upsets the rhythm of our lives—a crisis, a mistake, a temptation, a distraction.

In a moment life changes and we are left searching for answers. This is a critical time of decision. How will we react? Where will we look to find the answers we need?

This is the moment when eternal destinies are forged in the quiet reaches of the heart and mind as we struggle to respond to a personal trial. At such moments we can choose to remember the spiritual witnesses and testimony we have received and rely on the Lord to help us through the challenge in a way consistent with His teachings and commandments. Or we can discount the sacred whisperings we have received from the Spirit and turn to our own or another's wisdom for a solution. As John saw, in the end only those who choose to rely consistently and completely on their testimonies will be able to overcome all things in mortality and stand worthily before God at the last day.

A new convert to the Church taught me this lesson and strengthened my faith. This woman was converted to the Church in a land where the gospel was new. She gained a testimony of its truthfulness and embraced it with all her heart. The gospel brought her something she had known little of—hope. Her only son, who had struggled for years to overcome an addiction, began to attend church meetings with her and to change. Her heart rejoiced. She finally had hope that he could overcome his past and find happiness together with her.

But then her trial came. One night he came home late after being out with old friends and engaging in old ways. By morning he was dead.

How would she react to her trial? Would the emotion of a mother grieving the loss of her only son overcome her? Would she begin to question her Heavenly Father, as others did, wondering why He would let this happen? Would she become bitter and withdraw from the enlivening doctrines of the Restoration? No! She returned to the testimony she had received during her conversion and gave thanks to a loving Heavenly Father for bringing the gospel to her before the crisis so that she would have the strength to endure it. With a witness of the reality of God's plan, she could go on. She didn't have all the answers, but she had a testimony and relied on it for the strength to endure her trial. God's plan is designed so that each of us will go through many trials in our lives. Trials are His way of stretching us and helping us become as He is. Our crises will differ in magnitude and frequency, but they will continue throughout our lives. As John learned, strength to overcome these trials and return to Heavenly Father is found in the word of our testimonies. I testify that as we turn to our testimony of Him in times of crisis, we can find the strength to overcome all that we are asked to endure. ■



God's plan is designed so that each of us will go through many trials Trials are His way of . . . helping us become as He is.

I used to think that happiness comes after the hard part is over. But I have learned that we can be happy while enduring.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY CARY HENRIE

ENDURING WELL

By Emma Petty Addams

As a runner, I found that endurance came naturally, both on and off the race course. I never looked at trials as adversity—just challenges to meet head-on and with great intensity. I figured I could grit my teeth and get through any physical, emotional, or other struggle. Because this method worked well for me both in running and in other areas of my life, I thought that "to endure" meant "to hang on" through something unpleasant; then, after it ended, I could move on to the good stuff and be happy.

Seven years ago, I didn't often have to get through something unpleasant. I was newly married to my husband, Lee, who was finishing graduate school. I had a successful career as a legal negotiator. I worked entirely from home and mostly on my own schedule, and I was able to accept and refuse assignments as my time and lifestyle permitted. I also ran a 30-student piano studio out of our home. In addition, I was doing trail runs every week, mountain biking whenever I fancied, and taking yoga and kickboxing classes regularly. I was in the best health of my life.

A short time later, when I became pregnant, everything turned upside-down. I went from running half-marathons with ease to being unable to walk up the stairs without feeling dizzy. I couldn't teach piano lessons anymore because I was unable to sit upright through a half-hour session. I still managed to do some contract negotiations while lying in bed but would have to excuse myself from conference calls when I became sick. I became dehydrated. At a time I should have been gaining weight, I lost almost 15 percent of my body weight and had to receive IV fluids on several occasions. And instead of being happy, glowing, and looking forward to the birth of our first child, I was a depressed shadow of my former self. Fortunately, with the help of doctors, medication, and my clear-headed and kind husband, I got through those difficult nine months and gave birth to a healthy baby boy. I thought I had successfully passed through what would be the most difficult trial of my life—now I could move on to the good stuff. Little did I know.



THE MEANING OF THE WORD *ENDURE*

Endure to the End: To remain true to the commandments of God despite temptation, opposition, and adversity throughout life."
***Preach My Gospel* (2004), 70.**

HAPPINESS AMID ADVERSITY



When I was young I loved playing sports, and I have many fond memories of those days. But not all of them are pleasant. I remember one day after my football team lost a tough game, I came home feeling discouraged. My mother was there. She listened to my sad story. She taught her children to trust in themselves and each other, not blame others for their misfortunes, and give their best effort in everything they attempted.

"When we fell down, she expected us to pick ourselves up and get going again. So the advice my mother gave to me then wasn't altogether unexpected. It has stayed with me all my life.

" 'Joseph,' she said, 'come what may, and love it.'

"I have often reflected on that counsel.

"I think she may have meant that every life has peaks and shadows and times when it seems that the birds don't sing and bells don't ring. Yet in spite of discouragement and adversity, those who are happiest seem to have a way of learning from difficult times, becoming stronger, wiser, and happier as a result. . . .

"How can we love days that are filled with sorrow? We can't—at least not in the moment. I don't think my mother was suggesting that we suppress discouragement or deny the reality of pain. I don't think she was suggesting that we smother unpleasant truths beneath a cloak of pretended happiness. But I do believe that the way we react to adversity can be a major factor in how happy and successful we can be in life.

"If we approach adversities wisely, our hardest times can be times of greatest growth, which in turn can lead toward times of greatest happiness."

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (1917–2008), "Come What May, and Love It," *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 26.

What followed in the next few years was more challenging. Our son was colicky and restless, and he slept only in small chunks of time, even beyond his newborn days. My father, who was in his early 50s and was enjoying being a grandpa for the first time, was diagnosed with cancer and passed away much too soon. I started experiencing debilitating migraine headaches on a regular basis. Our family moved from California to New York, where I had another difficult pregnancy and felt drained as I tried to keep up with two young children in a small Manhattan apartment. But I was surviving it all with constant support and love from my husband, as well as increased respite as he took over my responsibilities during the most overwhelming times. I knew that trials were part of this life. As President Wilford Woodruff (1807–98) stated: "I have never read of the people of God in any dispensation passing through life, as the sectarian world would say, on flowery beds of ease, without opposition of any kind."[1]

As far as our difficulties were concerned, I had resolved to just "wait it out," pushing through whatever the current challenge was and trusting that things would be so much better once it was resolved. *This can't be real life*, I thought. I just needed to hold on, knowing this too would pass.

At the forefront of our struggles was evidence that our first child was not developing and communicating the way other children his age were. Before long, he was diagnosed with autism.

Maybe that's when I began to realize that "enduring" adversity means more than "getting through it." With autism, there is no such thing as "sitting tight" and letting it pass or work itself out. There is no guarantee that our son will push through to the next developmental stage on his own or that he will grow out of his difficult behaviors. These experiences as a mother of a child with special needs have vastly changed my perspective about adversity and have helped me learn—gradually—what has been the most important lesson of my life: It is not enough to have trials and to get through them. We have to endure them *well*.

Because of what our family has experienced, we feel greater empathy for others' struggles, whatever they may be and find ourselves reaching for a greater understanding of the Savior's love for us. We are learning that through our active use of the Atonement, it is indeed possible to be "troubled on every side, yet not distressed; . . . perplexed, but not in despair;

"Persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed (2 Corinthians 4:8–10).



In James 5:10–11 this lack of despair is pushed one step further: "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

"Behold, we count them *happy* which endure" (emphasis added).

In my former understanding of endurance, happiness came at the end, *after* the hard part is over. But this scripture, coupled with my own experiences, taught me that you can be happy *while* enduring. Even though I have come to an intellectual understanding of this truth, certainly I am still learning how to put it into practice. But I know that what lies at the heart of the principle is where we put our trust; and when I prayerfully turn to the scriptures, I am patiently taught over and over again where to look.

John 6 tells the story of the Savior feeding the 5,000. The day after this great miracle, the multitude seeks Him out. He tells them: "Ye seek me, not because ye desire to keep my sayings, neither because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled" (John 6:26, footnote a, from Joseph Smith Translation).

"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you; for him hath God the Father sealed" (John 6:27).

As He describes the "true bread from heaven" given by the Father, the crowd requests: "Lord, evermore give us this bread.

"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:34–35).

I am grateful for the challenges our family has faced because they have helped me draw closer to my Savior. I know that even in the midst of our afflictions, in the epicenter of our adversity, if we choose to eat of the bread of life, to internalize the teachings of our Savior and make daily use of His Atonement, we will find within ourselves the power to endure and to endure well. If we choose to merely endure without partaking of this gift, I know that the Lord will continue to give us experiences that will eventually help us understand this truth. As we allow the love of the Lord to abide within us through obedience to His commandments, we can have the strength to be happy and experience joy—even during times of adversity. ■

***These experiences as a mother of a child with special needs have vastly changed my perspective about adversity. It is not enough to have trials and to get through them. We have to endure them* well.**

NOTE

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff*, (2004), 218.

ART SELECTED FROM THE CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM'S INTERNATIONAL ART COMPETITIONS

Home A SACRED & SAFE HAVEN



Right: *Angels Will Attend Thee,* by Jan Cameron Astle, Australia



Above: *Forever,* by Chayce Whitworth, Idaho

In this world where the family is under attack as many "call evil good, and good evil," (See Isaiah 5:20, 2 Nephi 15:20) the gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us about the sacred nature of the family.

"Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. . . . Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. . . .

"The family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ."[1]

There is safety in the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ and in our covenants. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, individuals and relationships can be healed. Adults and children can find love and safety within the bonds of family—no matter what its current configuration. Following is artwork that captures the intrinsic power available to us as we live the gospel within the sacred walls of our home.

NOTES

1. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign,* Nov. 1995, 102.



Above: ***Lead Me, Guide Me, Walk beside Me,*** **by Alyssa Hokanson, Wyoming**



Right: ***They Did Not Doubt,*** **by Joseph Brickey, Utah**



Above: ***Before Work,*** **by Rebecca Marie Hawkes, Utah**



Above: ***Journey to Moriah,*** **by David Koch, Utah**





Above, top: ***She Also Serves,*** **by Julie Lochridge, Idaho**

Above, middle: ***The Greatest Creation of God,*** **by Mirian Ferreira, Utah**



Right: ***Living Water,*** **Sally Poet, California**



Left: ***Father's Blessing,*** **by Lupo Adolfo Lasin, Philippines**



Right: *Earthly Dreams, Eternal Hope,* by Candace Lee Hunt, Arizona

Right: *Under Her Wing,* Dennis Smith, Utah

Left: *Love,* by Nnamdi Okonkwo, Nigeria





TWO WORDS

THAT CAN CHANGE LIVES

By Alice Ruth Drechsel*

When I was a young missionary in Ohio, I heard a sacrament meeting talk about saying, thank you. "Think of the things you are grateful for," the speaker said. "Think of the people who have taught you, encouraged you, loved you, and made a positive difference in your life." Then he said: "Now think back. Have you told them you are grateful for them and why? That is something we each can and should do. Tell them in person, by phone, in a note, or in a letter. We can start today. Let's do it!"

So I did it. That night I thought about my life and asked Heavenly Father if there was someone I had never thanked who had really affected my life for good. To my surprise, a name and face popped into my mind immediately—Sister Mickelsen, my mother's friend. I'd known her all my life. She knew me only as my parents' youngest child.

Without waiting, I wrote her a letter. I thanked her for being an important, good influence in my life and for being a gracious lady, always well groomed and refined. I thanked her for her example to me when she would touch the shoulder of a young mother with several wiggly children during sacrament meeting, smile, and reach out to hold her restless baby.

Then I told her that when I was young I was a tomboy. Many times I heard my mother say, "It's great to love sports and play ball, dear. However, remember that every girl who grows up will become a woman, but it is most important that she also learn to become a lady." And then Mother would describe a lady to me.

I wrote in my letter, "I looked around to find a person such as Mother described. It was you, Sister Mickelsen. For years I looked up to you and tried to be like you. Thank you again for all you are and have done for me."

I mailed the letter and then forgot about it.

When I returned from my mission, I gave a talk in sacrament meeting. Afterward, several people told me they liked my talk. And then I found myself in a tight bear-hug embrace from an older man who had tears on his cheeks.

I was amazed when I realized this was President Mickelsen of the stake presidency, for he was a reserved, dignified banker who rarely showed emotion.

Seeing I was shocked, he said, "Let me explain something. My dear wife died several months ago after being sick a long time. She became discouraged, feeling she had failed to make a real difference in anyone's life.

" 'You have,' I told her. 'You've been a wonderful wife and mother and friend, and you've always served in the Church.'

" 'But everyone does those things,' she said. 'What have I ever done that I didn't *have* to do, that I wasn't assigned?'

"And then your letter came," President Mickelsen said to me. "She read it and wept, and read it again and again. She kept it on the table by her bed so she could read it every day until she died. It was a great comfort to her. I can never thank you enough for writing her that letter."

I am so grateful I wrote it.

Do you know someone you could thank? ■

**The author passed away just before publication of this article.*

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MATTHEW REIER


Dear Sister Mickelsen,

I would like to thank you for being an important and good influence in my life. Your example of a gracious, well groomed and refined lady helped me make the transition from a young tomboy to a young woman.

I remember watching you in sacrament meeting - like an young mother with several children - nudge with your hand to hush, or pat the shoulder and look out to hold an restless baby.

Many times I heard my mother say "He just to love spirit and play ball, dear." However, I remember that I may not grow up with talent & wish to become important, that was to learn to become a lady.

I looked around to find a person such as my mother. Sister Mickelsen, it was you. Thank you for your kindness to me. I appreciate you so much. I thank you a great deal for all you have done. I thank you for your love.



THE VALUE OF EXPERIENCING AND EXPRESSING

GRATITUDE

By Vaughn E. Worthen, Ph.D.

Associate Director, Counseling and Career Center, Brigham Young University

EXPERIENCING

Sixteen-year-old Louisa Mellor Clark was the oldest living child of James and Mary Ann Mellor, who crossed the plains in the Martin handcart company. Louisa recorded the following incident in her journal:

"The first snowstorm left about two feet of snow on the ground, and we began to feel very nervous. We had to wade through more streams, and sometimes up to our waists, and when we got through our clothes would freeze on us until a great many gave up and many died, mostly old people. At last the snow got to be four and five feet deep and often we had to shovel a road before we could move. Thus our traveling was very slow and our provisions nearly gave out.

"My mother, still being weak, finally gave up and said she could go no further. The

company could not wait for her, so she bade my father goodbye and kissed each one of the children Godspeed. Then my mother sat down on a boulder and wept. I told my sister, Elizabeth, to take good care of the twins and the rest of the family, and that I would stay with mother. I went a few yards away and prayed with faith that God would help us, that He would protect us from wolves, and that He would let us reach camp. As I was going back to where my mother was sitting I found a pie in the road. I picked it up and gave it to mother to eat. After resting awhile we started on our journey, *thanking God for the blessings*. A few miles before we reached camp we met my father coming out to meet us. We arrived in camp at 10:00 p.m.

"Many times after that mother felt like giving up and quitting, but then she would remember how wonderful the Lord had been to spare her so many times, and offered a prayer of gratitude instead. So she went on her way rejoicing while walking the blood-stained path of snow."[1]

Mary Ann Mellor's expressions of gratitude were not based simply on finding a life-sustaining pie but on the recognition that God cared about her and her family and provided for them. That recognition gave her a deep sense of God's grace, and her gratitude became a daily expression of faith in Him.

Gratitude is receiving significant attention in the emerging field of positive psychology. As a licensed psychologist, I have extensively researched the use of gratitude interventions in promoting well-being. I find that introducing these interventions into counseling at appropriate times is helpful in treating depression, reducing anxiety, and introducing a more positive focus to troubled relationships. Experiencing and expressing gratitude can help all of us—whatever our situation—lead fuller, richer lives.

AND EXPRESSING GRATITUDE CAN HELP ALL OF US LEAD FULLER, RICHER LIVES

What Is Gratitude?

Gratitude is a positive *experience* that comes from recognizing gifts or blessings and feeling thankful. It is also an *attitude*, a way of perceiving life, in which individuals are willing to receive and acknowledge the beneficial actions of others on their behalf. Those who consistently display such an attitude are said to have a grateful *disposition*. Gratitude is also a *habit* that can be cultivated, causing one to focus on the blessings of life. Finally, gratitude can be defined as a *coping response* to challenging or difficult circumstances.

Gratitude can have a profound effect on perspective, completely determining or altering the way we look at an experience. Two weeks after being called as a bishop, I underwent foot surgery. I spent the next year and a half on crutches before I completely recovered. When I became

To pioneer Mary Ann Mellor, a life-sustaining pie was more than an answer to prayer. It was the realization that God cared about her and her family, and gave her a sense of gratitude for His grace.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY DILLEEN MARSH



PRACTICING GRATITUDE CAN LEAD TO OPTIMISM, VITALITY, HAPPINESS, A SENSE

The long recuperation period following my surgery was at times discouraging, but I felt infused with energy when I took time to reflect on the blessings I had received.

discouraged by my disability and the demands on my time and energy, I often found comfort by reflecting on my blessings. I felt grateful for counselors who literally "carried the load"—my scriptures, bags, and other materials. I appreciated ward members who prayed for my recovery and sustained me by fulfilling their callings. I was grateful for priesthood blessings from my leaders, my counselors, and my father. I was thankful for my family's support in both my calling and my employment. I felt great dependence on my Heavenly Father for help with all my challenges and experienced daily His grace and blessings.

Prophets Teach the Principle of Gratitude

Gratitude has been extolled as a virtue in nearly every culture throughout time. It is a core element of many religions and is central to Christianity. Both ancient and modern prophets have recognized and taught the importance of gratitude. Scriptures counsel us to "give thanks" in everything (1 Thessalonians 5:18) and to arise daily with a heart "full of thanks unto God" (Alma 37:37). We are warned: "And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments" (D&C 59:21). Church leaders recognize and continually teach the importance of gratitude.

President Thomas S. Monson spoke of the power of gratitude when he stated, "We can lift ourselves, and others as well, when we refuse to remain in the realm of negative thought and cultivate within our hearts an attitude of gratitude."[2]

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has suggested that "in some quiet way, the expression and feelings of gratitude have a wonderful cleansing or healing nature. . . . Gratitude brings a peace that helps us overcome the pain of adversity and failure."[3] Truly, following the words of prophets to live with a sense of gratitude invites a spirit of happiness into our lives.

We Feel the Effects and Benefits of Gratitude

Current case studies and research show that cultivating and practicing gratitude can reduce symptoms in cases of mild to moderate depression and anxiety. Practicing gratitude can also lead to increases in optimism, vitality, happiness, a sense of well-being, and a greater satisfaction with life.[4] Grateful people tend to generate more positive memories, reminding them of the good in their lives.[5] Those with higher levels of gratitude are viewed as more empathetic and supportive, more forgiving, and more likely to assist others.[6] Grateful people also report feeling less envious and more generous with their possessions. They thus enjoy better quality relationships.[7]

Gratitude also helps in coping with adversity. Those who practice it in times of adversity are



THE NOBLEST OF VIRTUES

If ingratitude be numbered among the serious sins, then gratitude takes its place among the noblest of virtues.

"Despite the changes which come into our lives and with gratitude in our hearts, may we fill our days—as much as we can—with those things which matter most."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Finding Joy in the Journey," *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 87.

more likely to seek and find a "silver lining" in their experiences.[8] Finally, those who try to feel greater levels of gratitude report fewer physical complaints, more time spent in physical exercise, and better sleep duration and quality.[9]

What Can We Do to Cultivate Gratitude in Ourselves and Others?

Even if we are not currently in the habit of feeling and showing gratitude, we can make it a way of life. Following are some ideas for recognizing blessings and expressing thanks.

- **Keep a Gratitude Journal**

Record daily or several times a week three to five blessings or "tender mercies" you have felt or experienced, such as good health, a positive relationship with someone, improvements, or lessons learned. Focus on describing the experiences, including recording your thoughts and emotions about them, rather than merely cataloguing them or analyzing them. Your purpose is to relive and savor those experiences, encouraging you to experience them more often.

- **Make a Gratitude Visit**

Think about someone who has been kind or has done something for you whom you have never properly thanked. Consider, for example, parents, grandparents, friends, teachers, coaches, and employers. Write that person a gratitude letter, being specific about the details of the kindness toward you and how it affected you. If possible, deliver it in person, sharing the contents and expressing your appreciation. Tell the person how and what you are doing now. This approach will not only enhance your own feelings of gratitude but it will also encourage the people you visit to continue in beneficial service to others, knowing that the service is gratefully received.

- **Create a Gratitude Catalog**

In addition to the journal described above, make a comprehensive list of all your blessings, many of which might also have appeared in your journal. After listing any of the obvious blessings that you may enjoy—such as health, family members, and the gospel—shift to "smaller" blessings, such as running water, electricity, flowers, and so forth. As part of this exercise, try to remember blessings that you didn't previously recognize as blessings. For example, pain is a signal that something needs attention, perhaps in order to save a life. A hard experience can teach us patience and wisdom. A wrong committed by another toward us can teach us forgiveness.

Sharing with someone the specific details of how their kindness has affected you by sending a letter or making a visit lifts both the giver and receiver.



OF WELL-BEING, A GREATER SATISFACTION WITH LIFE, MORE EMPATHY AND SUPPORT

•Eliminate Ungrateful Thoughts

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wisely counseled, "No misfortune is so bad that whining about it won't make it worse."[10] Identify and list your complaining and ungrateful thoughts, and replace them with grateful thoughts and problem-solving strategies. We are prone to be more grateful when we recall how others have contributed to our success and happiness and when we focus on positive action rather than passive complaining.

•Express Prayers of Gratitude

Regularly dedicate an entire prayer to your expressions of gratitude.[11] Be specific; go beyond the obvious. See how exhaustive you can be. Discover the truth in the lines "And it will surprise you what the Lord has done."[12]

•Train Yourself to Use Gratitude Language

Make a habit of writing letters of appreciation. Say thank you frequently to your loved ones and also to cashiers, postal workers, and others who serve you in any capacity. As you interact with community and civil servants and workers, consider writing a letter of commendation to their supervisors, praising their work and expressing your appreciation.



•Recognize That Things Could Be Worse

Think of situations you are glad you don't experience, such as famine, war, or debilitating illness. Think of circumstances you would not want to experience. Be grateful your life is not more difficult as you consciously work to improve it. Demonstrate your gratitude to the Lord by doing whatever you can to assist those less fortunate than you.

•Enjoy the Journey

As you set goals and strive to meet them, remind yourself of your progress even if you have not yet met them. For example, if your goal is to lose 25 pounds, celebrate the 10 you have lost by noting and reminding yourself of health improvements: lower blood pressure, greater energy, stronger muscles, more flexibility. If your goal is to complete reading the Book of Mormon this year, remind yourself of the many spiritual moments you experience, for example, as you read the magnificent sermon of King Benjamin.

•Learn the Art of Being Content

Paul declared, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Philippians 4:11). He further taught, "But godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Timothy 6:6). It is tempting to complain and murmur when life is challenging and things don't appear to be working out as we wish. We learn from Nephi in his great afflictions on his journey: "I did praise him all the day long; and I did not murmur against the Lord because of mine afflictions" (1 Nephi 18:16). The people of Ammon "praised God even in the very act of perishing under the sword" (Alma 24:23). The act of thanking and praising has great power to help us endure and is one of the surest methods for increasing happiness. It

THOSE WHO FEEL GREATER LEVELS OF GRATITUDE REPORT FEWER PHYSICAL COMPLAINTS.

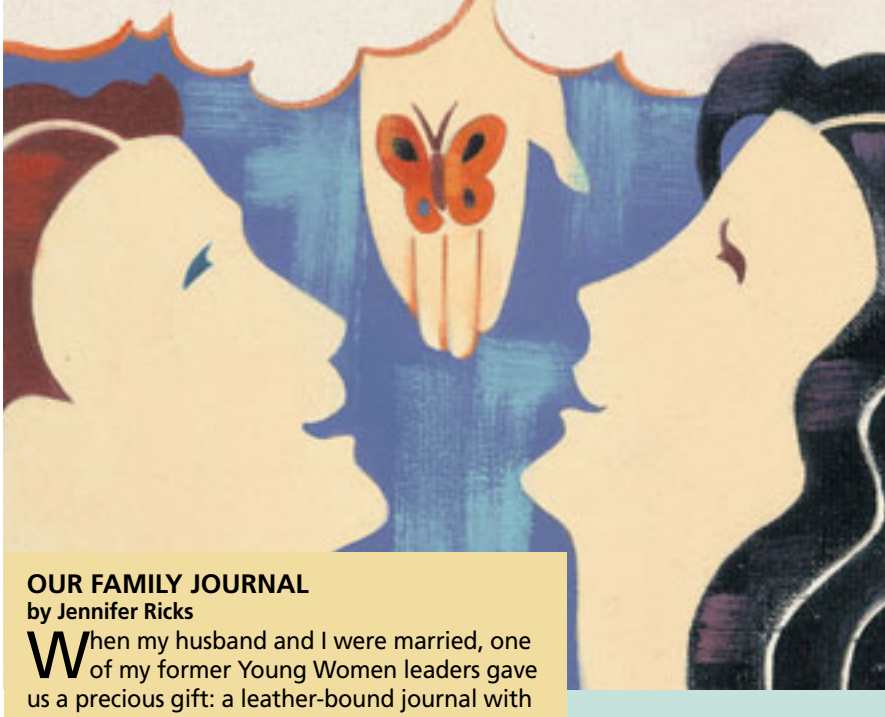
We tend to be more grateful when we focus on positive action, not on passive complaining.

is also a way to define our relationship with God, from whom all blessings flow.

God reminded the Israelites that He gave them "great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, and houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not, when thou shalt have eaten and be full; then beware lest thou forget the Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:10–12). He has similarly blessed us. When we recognize His hand in all things we naturally desire to express thanks and praise. We realize that He knows more than we do, that He doesn't relish our suffering, and that in the eternal balance we are still in His debt. If we consider our blessings, we come to realize that if we were blessed on the scale of our best efforts, we would enjoy far less than what we already enjoy.

Like Mary Ann Mellor, who gave thanks to God for preserving her life and sustaining her on her pioneer journey, we can recognize the blessings that a loving Heavenly Father so generously bestows on us. And as we acknowledge these gifts of grace, our expressions of gratitude can, like Mary Ann's, become an expression of faith in Him. ■

MORE TIME SPENT IN PHYSICAL EXERCISE



OUR FAMILY JOURNAL

by Jennifer Ricks

When my husband and I were married, one of my former Young Women leaders gave us a precious gift: a leather-bound journal with gold-edged pages and an artistically textured cover. She also pasted our wedding announcement inside the front cover.

We loved the gift and decided to save it for a special purpose. That fall while we were watching President Henry B. Eyring's conference talk, we knew why we had saved our special journal. We would record our daily blessings upon its beautiful pages as we found ways "to recognize and remember God's kindness." As we began to find the joy in each day, we "became ever more certain that our Heavenly Father hears and answers prayers" and felt more gratitude for His blessings. (See "O Remember, Remember," *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 67.)

Too often we had been looking to the future for happiness. I'd be happy when we graduated from school, found a job, started a family, bought a house, and eventually retired in comfort. But when we instead focused on our daily blessings, we experienced greater joy in our marriage and life in general.

Our beautiful wedding gift is now a source of true inspiration for us. Our daily recollections of Heavenly Father's blessings help us "preserve that memory for the day that I, and those that I love, will need to remember how much God loves us and how much we need Him" (69).

BETTER SLEEP

Through the thoughtful gift of a former youth leader, Brian and Jennifer Ricks found a way to regularly recognize the hand of the Lord in their lives.

NOTES

1. Kate B. Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage,* (1975), 17:305, emphasis added.
2. Thomas S. Monson, "An Attitude of Gratitude," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Feb. 2000, 2.
3. Robert D. Hales, "Gratitude for the Goodness of God," *Ensign*, May 1992, 65.
4. Michael E. McCullough, Robert A. Emmons, and JoAnn Tsang, "The Grateful Disposition: A Conceptual and Empirical Topography," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, (2002), 82, 114; 188–99.
5. Philip C. Watkins, Dean L. Grimm, and Russell L. Kolts, "Counting Your Blessings: Positive Memories among Grateful Persons," *Current Psychology,* (2004), 23, 59.
6. McCullough, et al. 120, 124.
7. Kennon M. Sheldon and Sonja Lyubomirsky, "Achieving Sustainable New Happiness: Prospects, Practices, and Prescriptions." In A. Linley and S. Joseph (eds.), *Positive Psychology in Practice,* (2004), 135–37.
8. Glenn Affleck and Howard Tennen, "Construing Benefits from Adversity: Adaptational Significance and Dispositional Underpinnings," *Journal of Personality*, (1996), 64, 909.
9. Robert A. Emmons and Michael E. McCullough, "Counting Blessings versus Burdens: An Experimental Investigation of Gratitude and Subjective Well-Being in Daily Life," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, (2003), 84, 381, 386.
10. Jeffrey R. Holland, "The Tongue of Angels," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2007, 18.
11. See Elder David A. Bednar, "Pray Always," *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 42.
12. "Count Your Blessings," *Hymns*, no. 241.

THE LORD TRULY PROTECTED US

By Kevin D. Casper

On June 7, 1994, I was returning home by ferry with five other missionaries after a zone conference in Eastern Samar, Philippines. The night air was humid and heavy. After stowing our travel bags at our cots on the second level, four of us went to the front deck to escape the heat. Elders Dunford and Bermudez, however, stayed and went to sleep.

I was conversing with Elder Kern when we heard a firecracker-like explosion from the starboard side. Suddenly flames, fed by fuel from the engine room, were consuming the back of the ship. Smoke filled the passageways, followed by a power outage that left the panicked passengers in the dark.

The four of us on deck gathered together, praying for calm and clear thinking and for the Spirit to guide us. Immediately afterward, Elder Valentine walked quickly back inside the ship looking for life jackets. In the cabin he met Elder Dunford, who gave him two life jackets and left to find Elder Bermudez. Then Elder Valentine found two more life jackets in the dark. Miraculously, despite the chaos, he made it down the passageway without anyone getting in his way, and he was back on deck in 20 seconds. By this time the bow was crowded with passengers, and the flames were coming close. There was no other choice except to jump. We put on our life jackets and said a short prayer before plunging in. Elder Valentine was shoved by the panicked group behind us, but he hit the water unharmed 10 feet (3 m) below.

The area around the boat was well lit because of the fire, and we could hear the screams of people around us. The four of us regrouped a short distance from the boat, amid the crowds that had also jumped, and swam to get away from the burning three-level vessel. We prayed again, thanking our Father in Heaven for the protection we had received and asked for help in finding our companions, Elder Dunford and Elder Bermudez. Elder Valentine saw them with life jackets, but we hadn't seen them on the deck.



ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL T. MALM

As the fire went out, the night became completely dark, and the waves were rolling, making it difficult for us to stay afloat even with the life jackets. Again we offered a prayer, this time asking for guidance to someone we could help. We soon found two women with children and an elderly man, and we took turns keeping everyone afloat. We managed until we found a small raft and put the passengers on it, but we felt others could use it, so we remained behind in the water.

After 30 minutes the wind picked up, rain started falling, and the already-large waves grew. We were still not sure what had happened to the other elders and knew the storm would halt any rescue efforts. Elder Kern, acting as a voice for the group, prayed for the storm to calm and that the other elders would be protected. Within a few minutes, the storm was gone.

We waited, awed by what we had witnessed, then heard Elder Dunford yelling out to Elder Kern. We shouted and swam towards them. Elders Dunford and Bermudez had managed to jump off the ship by climbing out a window, and they had two women, without life jackets, clinging to their backs.

We stayed together for some time, then caught sight of fishing boat lights leaving the Guiuan shore area. It was not long until one boat discovered us, but it was almost full, so we placed the two women in it and waited.

We had been in the water for two hours when another boat found us and took us to shore. We made it to the missionary apartment in Guiuan in the early morning of June 8, which was my 21st birthday. We prayed for the safe rescue of others still out in the sea and again gave thanks to our Heavenly Father for the protection we had received.

I will never forget this experience, and I hope never to forget the feeling of security we had throughout the whole ordeal. The Lord truly protected us. From this experience, I gained a greater testimony that the Lord is with His children always and grants us the peace and help we need during our trials. ■



THE LAW OF THE FAST

The law of the fast is a perfect law, and we cannot begin to approach perfection until we decide to make it a part of our lives.

By Elder Robert L. Simpson (1915–2003)
Of the Seventy



Robert L. Simpson was born on August 8, 1915, in Salt Lake City, Utah. He married Jelaire Chandler in the Mesa Arizona Temple on June 24, 1942. They had four children. Elder Simpson's first calling as a General Authority was as First Counselor to Presiding Bishop John H. Vandenberg on September 30, 1961. He later served as an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. Elder Simpson died on April 15, 2003, in St. George, Utah, at the age of 87. The following article comes from a general conference address originally given in October 1967. Punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing have been standardized; subheads have been added.

One of the most neglected and yet most needed laws for this troubled generation in a modern world of acceleration and distraction is the law of the fast. Fasting and praying have been referred to almost as a singular function from the earliest times. Adam's generation fasted and prayed, as did Moses on Sinai ([see] Deuteronomy 9:9–11). . . .

. . . Following the Master's visit . . . to the Western Hemisphere, the people were told to continue in "fasting and prayer, and in meeting together oft both to pray and to hear the word of the Lord" (4 Nephi 1:12). So complete and sincere were the people in obeying His commandments "that there was no contention among all the people, in all the land; but there were mighty miracles wrought among the disciples of Jesus" (4 Nephi 1:13). Wouldn't it be thrilling to enjoy such a condition today!

Prayer and Fasting Today

His law has been reconfirmed in our day, for through a modern prophet . . . , He said, "I give unto you a commandment that ye shall continue in prayer and fasting from this time forth" [D&C 88:76]. Then in the very next verse He mentions gospel teaching almost as a prime product of the prayer and fasting process. In the words of the Lord:

"And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.

"Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand" (D&C 88:77–78).

No man or woman can hope to teach of things spiritual unless he is directed by that spirit, for "the Spirit shall be given unto

DETAIL OF *THE CONVERSION OF ALMA THE YOUNGER AND THE SONS OF MOSIAH*, BY DAVID LINN, COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MATTHEW REIER

you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach.

"And all this ye shall observe to do as I have commanded concerning your teaching, until the fulness of my scriptures is given.

"And as ye shall lift up your voices by the Comforter, ye shall speak and prophesy as seemeth me good;



The sons of Mosiah "had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God."

"For, behold, the Comforter knoweth all things, and beareth record of the Father and of the Son" (D&C 42:14–17).

A Promise for Every Teacher

Oh, that every teacher might catch the spirit of this promise and claim this offered partnership, available to all who are engaged in the teaching of truth.

There are no better examples of teaching by the Spirit than the sons of Mosiah. The Book of Mormon tells us how they became "strong in the knowledge of the truth; for they were men of a sound understanding and they had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God.

"But this is not all; they had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God" (Alma 17:2–3).

Is there a priesthood or auxiliary leader any place in this Church who wouldn't give all to possess such power, such assurance? Remember this, above all else, that, according to Alma, they gave themselves to much fasting and prayer. You see, there are certain blessings that

can only be fulfilled as we conform to a particular law. The Lord made this very clear through the Prophet Joseph Smith when He declared, "For all who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof, as were instituted from before the foundation of the world" (D&C 132:5).

Now, the Lord could not have stated the position more clearly, and, in my opinion, too many Latter-day Saint parents today are depriving themselves and their children of one of the sweetest spiritual experiences that the Father has made available to them.

The Monthly Fast Day

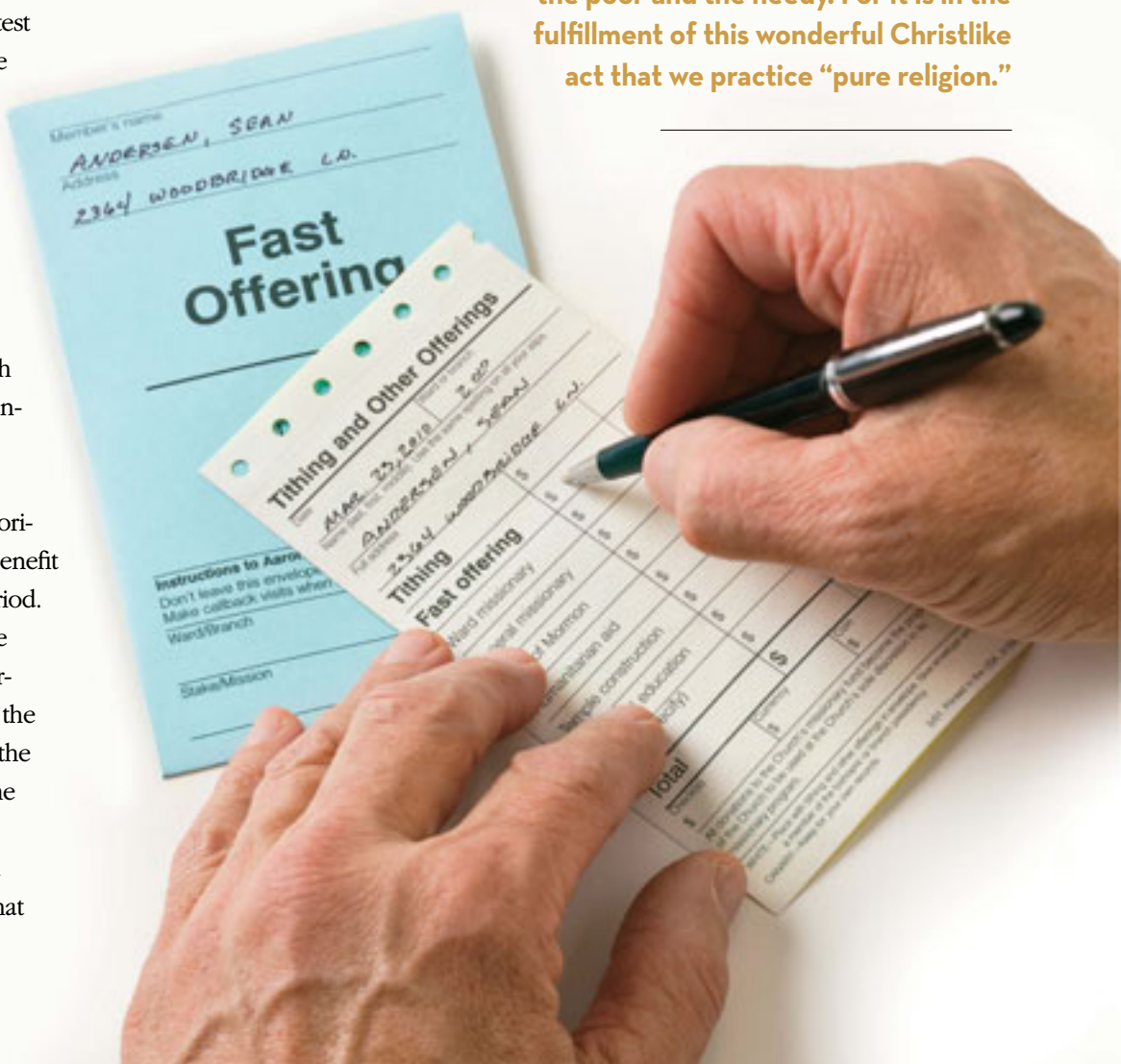
In addition to the occasional fasting experience for a special purpose, each member of the Church is expected to miss two [consecutive] meals on the fast and testimony Sunday. . . .

Competent medical authorities tell us that our bodies benefit by an occasional fasting period. That is blessing number one and perhaps the least important. Second, we contribute the money saved from missing the meals as a fast offering to the bishop for the poor and the needy. And third, we reap a particular spiritual benefit that can come to us in no other way. It is a sanctification of the soul for us today just as it was for some choice people who lived 2,000 years ago. I quote briefly from the Book of Mormon: "Nevertheless they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God" (Helaman 3:35). Wouldn't you like this to happen to you? It can, you know!



Did you notice it said that those who do this have their souls filled with "joy and consolation"? You see, the world in general thinks that fasting is a time for "sackcloth and ashes," a time to carry a look of sorrow,

The real joy comes with the blessing of the poor and the needy. For it is in the fulfillment of this wonderful Christlike act that we practice "pure religion."



as one to be pitied. On the contrary, the Lord admonishes:

"Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

"But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

"That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:16–18).

Blessings of Fasting

Now, we turn to the most important part of this great law. So far we have only discussed those areas that bless us. The real joy comes with the blessing of the poor and the needy. For it is in the fulfillment of this wonderful Christlike act that we practice "pure religion and undefiled" spoken of by James [see James 1:27]. Can you think of a better or more perfect Christian function than "pure religion and undefiled"? I can't.

The Lord, speaking through Moses, observed:

"If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother:

"But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him" (Deuteronomy 15:7–8).

Then He goes on to promise him who gives: "The Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto" (Deuteronomy 15:10). He concludes: "Therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land" (Deuteronomy 15:11). . . .

A Perfecting Law

Yes, the law of the fast is a perfect law, and we cannot begin to approach perfection until we decide to make it a part of our lives. When you start and stop the fast is up to you, but wouldn't it be nice to culminate it and be at your spiritual peak for the fast and testimony meeting?

How much you give the bishop as a donation is also up to you, but isn't it thrilling to know that your accounting with the Lord has been paid willingly and with accuracy?

Satisfaction Comes with Obedience

. . . Have you ever noticed how satisfying it is way deep inside each time you are obedient to Heavenly Father's desires? There can be no equal to the peace of mind that always comes as the reward for obedience to truth.



The world needs self-discipline. You can find it in fasting and prayer. Our generation is sick for lack of self-control. Fasting and prayer help to instill this virtue.

The world's future depends upon an urgent return to family unity. Fasting and prayer will help to guarantee it. Each person has greater need for divine guidance. There is no better way. We all have need to overcome the powers of the adversary. His influence is incompatible with fasting and prayer. . . .

. . . I join my testimony with Alma of old when he declared:

"Behold, I testify unto you that I do know that these things whereof I have spoken are true. And how do ye suppose that I know of their surety?

"Behold, I say unto you they are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit" (Alma 5:45–46). ■

FROM BOTTOM LEFT, PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY CODY BELL; TOP LEFT: BY JERRY GARNS AND MICHAEL SANDBERG; RIGHT: BY STEVE BUNDERSON



Lifted by the Lord's Love

By Darrell Knight

My life's dream was to be a pilot, but did the Lord have a different plan for me?

As a young boy I was fascinated with the subject of flight. I couldn't understand how a heavier-than-air machine could rise above the earth and travel through the atmosphere. Consequently, I spent my library time at school researching famous pilots and engineers. After several years I finally began to understand the science behind flight. I even built several model airplanes out of balsa wood, paper, and plastic parts. But flying model airplanes wasn't enough; I wanted to be a pilot.

After graduating from college, I entered the U.S. Air Force flight school. Once there, I was assigned to a gruff, retired lieutenant colonel. He aimed to make us tough-minded servicemen by pushing us to our maximum physical, mental, and emotional endurance. Every day for two hours he voiced his disapproval of our performance with an insulting stream of foul language through my headset. I tried harder and harder to please him but to no avail. As a result, I became very tense and could not relax.

One day after he fired his usual verbal barrage, he ordered me to land and get out of the aircraft. "If you don't fly better tomorrow," he warned, "you and I will part company forever."

I was shocked! I had exerted every ounce of effort possible in the program. How could I tell my fiancée and my parents that I had flunked out of flight school? At this unexpected turn of events, the tensions of the past weeks nearly overwhelmed me.

That evening I was so troubled by the day's flight that I skipped dinner and went to my room. I was angry at both my instructor and myself. I hated the prospect of being called before the flight board and being expelled from the program. Why did this have to happen to me?

I lay in the dark for several hours, feeling angry and thinking about my predicament. Finally, my heart began to soften, and I realized that I could either question the Lord or put my faith in Him. I rolled out of bed, knelt down, and poured my heart out to Him. I thanked Him for His guidance in my life and apologized for considering my perspective only. I explained that I was willing to accept His will—even if it meant changing vocations.

As I returned to my cot, I felt peace. The feeling gradually intensified until I was engulfed in a sweet and thrilling contentment that eased my pain and my sense of rebellion. I recognized it as the Savior's love for me. I knew that I was not alone and that I was a valued son of Heavenly Father.

After a night's sleep, I arose and began preparing for the day. I felt a strong, new sense of calmness. I no longer dreaded my instructor's wrath. I knew that whatever happened, I would do my best and accept the results.

At 5:30 a.m. we took off. For two hours I went through the usual routine of rolls, loops, spins, and simulated forced landings. During that time I was calm and relaxed while my instructor was unusually quiet. I heard no stream of aggravating language over the headset. I had the most enjoyable flight of my life.

He finally broke the silence by asking, "Knight, you really want to fly, don't you?"

I answered with a firm, "Yes, sir, I do."

He replied, "Well, if you keep flying like you have today, we shouldn't have any more trouble."

I was so mentally and spiritually elated that I felt as if I could have walked on the clouds we were then passing. From that day on, we both adjusted to each other. His language never changed, but my reactions did.

That night I knelt in prayer and thanked the Lord for guiding my life and offering His love. I recalled the verse in the Doctrine and Covenants where the Lord comforted Joseph Smith: "My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; (D&C 121:7) . . . They shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good" (D&C 122:7).

My experiences with my flight instructor, while not enjoyable, were for my good. They softened my heart and brought me closer to my Savior. ■

ILLUSTRATION BY CHAD S. BAILEY

Safe IN HIS HAND

God warned Noah of the Flood and told the righteous how to escape.

God told Joseph in Egypt of the coming famine and how to prepare.

That same God speaks today through His prophets, giving counsel that brings peace and safety when followed.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). In the sacred quiet of the upper room, the Savior went on to tell His Apostles that they would face persecution and sorrow. Then He said: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

In His preface to the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord warned that "peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion." But the Savior also promised, "The Lord shall have power over his saints, and shall reign in their midst" (D&C 1:35–36).

Regarding the commotion of the last days, we are told that "men's hearts shall fail them" (D&C 45:26; 88:91). But the message of the gospel has always been one of peace—peace *toward* the world and peace *from,* or despite, the world. Surely "be of good cheer" teaches us not to let our hearts fail.

Every dispensation has seen tumult and war, terror and want. And to every dispensation the Lord has sent prophets to warn the wicked and reassure and prepare the righteous. It's no different in this, the great and final dispensation. In an unbroken line of succession since Joseph Smith, we have had prophets and apostles, seers and revelators, to guide and counsel us. They speak the Savior's message of peace and hope. They help us prepare our homes and our hearts so that we may have hope, not fear; peace, not anxiety.



Prophets, priests and kings . . . have looked forward with joyful anticipation to the day in which we live; and fired with heavenly and joyful anticipations they have sung and written and prophesied of this our day; . . . we are the favored people that God has made choice of to bring about the Latter-day glory."

President Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church,* 4:609–10.

Highlights of Church and World Events

The following time line provides a reassuring perspective. Even when the world has been in great turmoil and even when the Saints have suffered intense persecution, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has held to its steady course. Membership grows, stakes and temples spread across the earth, and the Lord continues to guide us through His chosen servants.

In any of the difficulties that lie ahead of us, as individuals and as a people, the Lord's voice should echo in our hearts: "Fear not, little children, for you are mine, and I have overcome the world, and you are of them that my Father hath given me" (D&C 50:41).

	1830–39
Church Events	Book of Mormon (left) published. Church organized. Kirtland Temple (below) dedicated. First mission, the British Mission, organized. First revelations published in A Book of Commandments (below left), later in Doctrine and Covenants.
Church Membership **Number of Stakes** **(end of decade)**	16,460 3
	1830–39
World Events	Revolution in France. First Opium War between Britain and China begins.









FAR RIGHT: IMAGES OF JOSEPH SMITH AND KIRTLAND TEMPLE COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY LIBRARY



Every time they persecute and try to overcome this people, they elevate us, weaken their own hands, and strengthen the hands and arms of this people. And every time they undertake to lessen our number, they increase it. And when they try to destroy the faith and virtue of this people, the Lord strengthens the feeble knees, and confirms the wavering in faith and power in God, in light, and intelligence. Righteousness and power with God increase in this people in proportion as the Devil struggles to destroy it."

President Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young,* sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 351.



	1840–49	1850–59	1860–69
Church Events	Articles of faith first published. Relief Society organized (left). Joseph Smith martyred. Saints move west. Brigham Young sustained as President of the Church. First Sunday School organized.	Ground broken for Salt Lake Temple. U.S. Army marches toward Utah to put down supposed rebellion. First non-English Book of Mormon published, in Denmark (below).	First conference held in newly completed Salt Lake Tabernacle (below). Transcontinental railroad completed in Utah. The first Church organization for young women begins.
Church Membership **Number of Stakes** **(end of decade)**	48,160 1	57,038 4	88,432 9

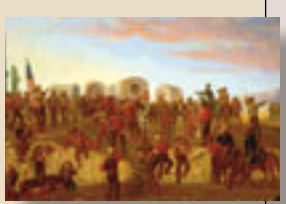








	1840–49	1850–59	1860–69
World Events	U.S. declares war on Mexico. Revolutions in Vienna, Venice, Berlin, Milan, Rome, Warsaw. Communist Manifesto published. Irish potato famine.	Crimean War. First transatlantic telegraph cable laid.	U.S. Civil War. Revolution in Spain. Serfs emancipated in Russia. Austria defeated in Seven Weeks' War.











You do not need to worry in the least, the Lord will take care of you and bless you. . . . He has stretched forth His hand to accomplish his purposes, and the arm of flesh cannot stay it. . . . It is only necessary for us to try with our might to keep pace with the onward progress of the work of the Lord, then God will preserve and protect us, and will prepare the way before us."

President Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, Oct. 1905, 5–6.



God has established His Church never to be thrown down nor given to another people. And as God lives and His people are true to Him and to one another, we need not worry about the ultimate triumph of truth."

President David O. McKay, in Conference Report, Apr. 1969, 152.

1870–79

Young Men MIA and Primary organizations begin.

St. George Temple (below)—the first in Utah—dedicated.

Mormon colonies established in Arizona and Colorado.

President Young dies.



128,386
22

1880–89





John Taylor becomes President of Church.

Intense persecution of Church members for plural marriage.

President Taylor dies; Wilford Woodruff becomes President of Church.



183,144
32

1890–99



President Woodruff issues manifesto ending plural marriage (see Official Declaration 1).

Salt Lake Temple (below and below left) dedicated.

President Woodruff dies; Lorenzo Snow becomes President of Church.

Renewed emphasis on tithing.



271,681
40

1870–79

Franco-Prussian War.

Revolt in Paris.



1880–89

Terrorism in Ireland.



1890–99

Sino-Japanese War.

Spanish-American War.

Boer War in South Africa.



IMAGES OF BRIGHAM YOUNG, PIONEERS, DANISH BOOK OF MORMON, AND WARS COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY LIBRARY; PHOTOGRAPH OF CEMETERY COURTESY OF SAMANTHA BRIDGE



"We are seeing the signs of our times as foretold by the prophets and by the Master himself. . . . In the Church, we have been witnessing some of the most dramatic things, and I can testify that you are seeing what the Lord is revealing for the needs of this people today. . . .

". . . Safety can't be won by tanks and guns and the airplanes and atomic bombs. There is only one place of safety and that is within the realm of the power of Almighty God that he gives to those who keep his commandments and listen to his voice, as he speaks through the channels that he has ordained for that purpose."

President Harold B. Lee, "Closing Remarks," *Ensign,* Jan. 1974, 125.





	1900–09	1910–19	1920–29
Church Events	President Snow dies; Joseph F. Smith becomes President of Church. Reed Smoot (left) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles becomes a member of U.S. Senate after long debate. First Presidency asks members in Europe to remain there to build up the Church.	Missionaries removed from France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium prior to outbreak of World War I. *Jesus the Christ* (below) published. President Smith receives vision of the redemption of the dead (see D&C 138). President Smith dies; he is succeeded by Heber J. Grant.	Elder Melvin J. Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles dedicates South America for preaching of gospel. First LDS institute of religion established. Tabernacle Choir (below) begins series of weekly radio broadcasts, which continue to this day.
Church Membership **Number of Stakes** **(end of decade)**	377,279 60	507,961 79	663,652 104







	1900–09	1910–19	1920–29
World Events	Russo-Japanese War. Russian Revolution of 1905. Earthquake kills 150,000 in southern Italy and Sicily.	Turkish-Italian War. Revolution in China. Balkan Wars. World War I. Russian Revolution of 1917. Worldwide influenza epidemic kills millions.	Stalin takes over Soviet Union. Hitler and Mussolini begin rise to power in Germany and Italy. U.S. stock market collapses, beginning worldwide economic crisis.









"Knowing what we know, and living as we are supposed to live, there really is no place, no excuse, for pessimism and despair. . . .

"I promise you in the name of the Lord whose servant I am that God will always protect and care for his people. We will have our difficulties the way every generation and people have had difficulties. But with the gospel of Jesus Christ, you have every hope and promise and reassurance. The Lord has power over his Saints and will always prepare places of peace, defense, and safety for his people. When we have faith in God we can hope for a better world—for us personally, and for all mankind."

President Howard W. Hunter, "An Anchor to the Souls of Men," *Ensign,* Oct. 1993, 70.

1930–39

The Church introduces a formal welfare program to assist needy and unemployed members (below).

In 1939 all missionaries in Germany are directed to move to neutral countries; then all missionaries are withdrawn from Europe.



803,528
129

1940–49



Members encouraged to plant gardens, bottle produce, and store coal.

President Grant dies; George Albert Smith succeeds him.

After WWII, the Church sends relief supplies to Europe (below).

Welfare becomes a permanent program of the Church.



1,078,671
175

1950–59



President Smith dies; David O. McKay becomes President of Church.

Ezra Taft Benson (below) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles chosen by U.S. president as Secretary of Agriculture.

President McKay declares, "Every member a missionary."



1,616,088
290

1930–39

Spanish monarchy overthrown.

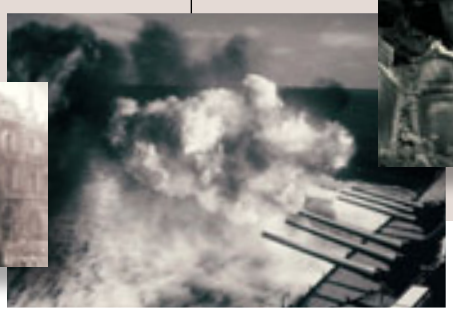
Mussolini invades Ethiopia.

Hitler invades Austria and Poland.

Japan invades China.

Russo-Finnish War.







1940–49

World War II.

Millions killed in the Holocaust.

First use of atomic weapons.

Cold War begins.

1950–59

Korean War.

Hydrogen bomb developed.

Cold War deepens.

Vietnam War escalates.

Fidel Castro takes power in Cuba.



PHOTOGRAPHS OF EARLY SAINTS, BOOK, EZRA TAFT BENSON IN GERMANY, AND RUINS OF KAISERHOF HOTEL IN BERLIN COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY LIBRARY; CHART, BATTLESHIP, CEMETERY, AND MISSILE © CORBIS; PAINTING OF DAVID O. MCKAY © EVERETT CLARK THORPE, MAY NOT BE COPIED



"We have built grain storage and storehouses and stocked them with the necessities of life in the event of a disaster. But the best storehouse is the family storeroom. . . .

"Our people for three-quarters of a century have been counseled and encouraged to make such preparation as will assure survival should a calamity come. . . .

"I have faith, my dear brethren, that the Lord will bless us, and watch over us, and assist us if we walk in obedience to His light, His gospel, and His commandments."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, "If Ye Are Prepared Ye Shall Not Fear," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 62.

	1960–69	1970–79	1980–89
Church Events	Formal language training for missionaries begins at Brigham Young University. The home teaching program replaces the ward teaching program. Family home evening program emphasized.	President McKay dies; he is succeeded by Joseph Fielding Smith. President Smith dies two years later; he is succeeded by Harold B. Lee, who dies after 18 months in office. Spencer W. Kimball becomes President of the Church. First Quorum of the Seventy is organized. Priesthood is extended to all worthy male members.	Subtitle "Another Testament of Jesus Christ" added to Book of Mormon. Second Quorum of the Seventy established. President Kimball dies; Ezra Taft Benson sustained as President of the Church.
Church Membership **Number of Stakes** **(end of decade)**	2,807,456 496	4,404,121 1,092	7,308,444 1,739
	1960–69	**1970–79**	**1980–89**
World Events	Berlin Wall erected. Cuban missile crisis. Arab-Israeli Six-Day War.	Arab-Israeli Yom Kippur War. Terrorists strike Munich Olympics. Genocide in Cambodia.	Falklands War. Israel invades Lebanon. Marcos regime toppled in Philippines. Airliner blown up over Lockerbie, Scotland. Berlin Wall opened. U.S. invades Panama.



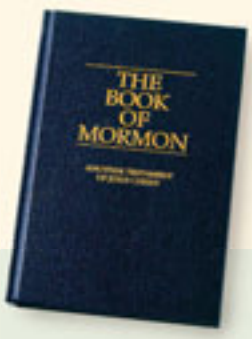


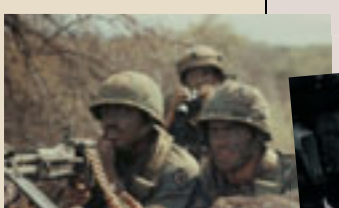


















"I testify to you that our promised blessings are beyond measure. Though the storm clouds may gather, though the rains may pour down upon us, our knowledge of the gospel and our love of our Heavenly Father and of our Savior will comfort and sustain us and bring joy to our hearts as we walk uprightly and keep the commandments. There will be nothing in this world that can defeat us.

"My beloved brothers and sisters, fear not. Be of good cheer. The future is as bright as your faith."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Be of Good Cheer," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2009, 92.





1990–99

500,000th missionary of this dispensation called.

President Benson dies and is succeeded by Howard W. Hunter, who serves just under nine months before his death.

Gordon B. Hinckley is set apart as Church President.

Intense temple-building program begins.



10,752,984
2,542

2000–2009



Church has more non-English-speaking members than English-speaking.

President Hinckley dies; Thomas S. Monson becomes 16th President of the Church.

1,000,000th missionary called.

The Conference Center (below) dedicated.

130 temples in operation.





13,750,651
2,858

1990–99

Persian Gulf War.

Soviet Union breaks up.

Yugoslav federation dissolved, resulting in years of warfare.

Earthquake in Japan kills thousands.

Massacres in Rwanda.





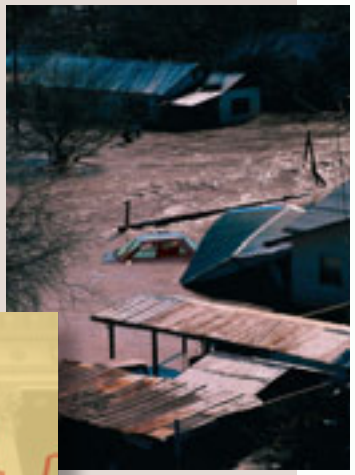
2000–2009

Terrorist attacks.

U.S. and allies invade Iraq.

Indian Ocean tsunami kills more than 225,000.

Global financial crisis.





PHOTOGRAPH OF SMALL FAMILY HOME EVENING MANUAL COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY LIBRARY; ILLUSTRATION ON LARGE MANUAL BY PHYLLIS LUCH; PHOTOGRAPH OF EZRA TAFT BENSON © BUSATH.COM; PHOTOGRAPH OF NAUVOO ILLINOIS TEMPLE BY SCOTT G. WINTERTON; WAR PHOTOGRAPHS, CHART, AND FLOOD PHOTOGRAPH © CORBIS; PHOTOGRAPH OF BRANDENBURG GATE © GETTY IMAGES

WE DOUBLED OUR FAST OFFERING

As we sat in sacrament meeting one Sunday morning, our bishop asked the members of our ward to give a more generous fast offering. My husband and I were newlyweds struggling to make ends meet while he completed his education. Shouldn't wealthy ward members be the ones to increase their fast offerings?

The bishop promised ward members they would experience miracles in their lives if they doubled their fast offerings. Despite my concerns, the Spirit confirmed to me that his promise was true.

Trembling as I wrote our fast offering check the following week, I doubled the amount. "We're going to starve," I said to myself as I sealed the envelope.

A few days later as I got into my car to drive to work, the red warning light came on for the oil. I added oil, but it leaked from the engine as quickly as I poured it in. When I called our mechanic, he told me to drive straight to his shop. Holding back tears, I drove a few miles to his repair shop and silently said a prayer.

The mechanic warned that the repair would probably be expensive but had to be done. He also pointed out that it was almost time to replace the car's timing belt—another expense we couldn't afford. I left the car at the shop and went to work devastated.

Later, when the mechanic called, he was upbeat and excited. "Of course he is," I thought. "He's about to make a ton of money off of us."

Actually, he called to share an amazing story. As he was working on our car, a friend happened by his auto shop. This friend, who works at a dealership that services my make of car, asked our mechanic what he was working on. When our mechanic explained the problem, his friend said, "Well, you know there's a recall for that problem. It's covered by the automaker."

I couldn't believe it! Then our mechanic explained that oil had gotten all over the engine, so the automaker would also cover the replacement of the timing belt and other belts!

Tears of gratitude sprang from my eyes as I recognized the blessing we had received from the Lord. I felt overwhelmed by His love and embarrassed by my lack of faith.

I haven't had perfect faith since this incident a few years ago, but I know that the Lord is acutely aware of our needs and struggles. I know He loves us and wants to help us. I also know that Heavenly Father will test us and not always answer our prayers as quickly as He did in this instance.



I added oil, but it leaked from the engine as quickly as I poured it in. Holding back tears, I drove to the repair shop.

Most important, I have a testimony of the blessings we can receive by paying a generous fast offering and of the blessings others receive as a result of our generosity. ■

Brooke Mackay, California, USA

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DOUG FAKKEL

DO YOU BELIEVE IN THE BOOK OF MORMON?

Around the time I joined the Church, I lost my job because of the harsh economic conditions in Nigeria. I thought my world had ended, yet I trusted in God—praying and fasting that He would help me find another job.

Within a month I had an interview with one of Nigeria's fast-growing construction companies. I met with a panel of three interviewers: the managing director, the general manager, and a consultant. I easily answered their routine questions, but then the consultant, a pastor of a local church, unexpectedly threw out a shocking question: "Are you Christian, Muslim, or Traditionalist?" he asked.

Beaming, I replied, "I am a Christian."

"What is the name of your church?" he continued.

I told him, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

"What! That church?" he cried. "You don't mean to tell me you attend *that* church, where all activities are shrouded in secrecy?" Looking directly into my eyes, he stated, "Say it is not true."

"It is true," I quickly replied. Then I added, "Our meetings are not held or shrouded in secrecy. You can come to our meetings next Sunday and see for yourself."

"I would not be in such a gathering," he replied. Having noticed the direction the interview had taken, the managing director called the consultant to order and thanked me for coming.

Three days later I was asked to return for a second interview. The managing director, the general manager, and the consultant were all there. After we had talked about purchasing and supplying, the consultant asked, "Are you a Mormon?"

"Yes, I am," I replied.

"Do you believe in the Book of Mormon?"

"Absolutely! I believe," I answered.

"Do you believe that Joseph Smith encountered God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, when he was a young boy of 14 years?"

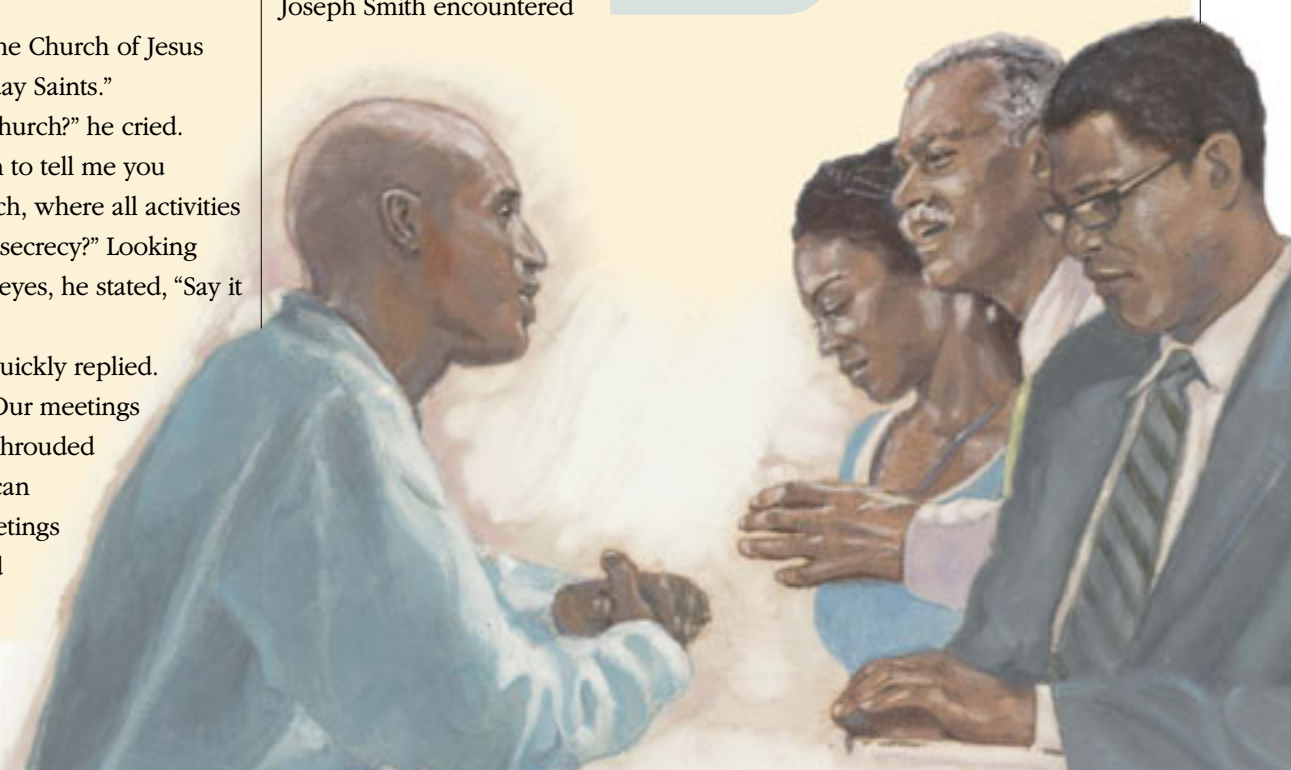
"Yes," I responded. "I know it is true."

At the end of the interview, I was told that scores of applicants had been interviewed. A few weeks later, to my great surprise, I received a phone call from the managing director. She said I had been successful in the two interviews, and she asked me to come in to sign a letter of employment.

You don't mean to tell me you attend that church?" the consultant asked me.

Looking back on the experience, I am grateful I did not deny the Church or my faith. God answered my prayers and blessed me with a job. I know if we remain steadfast, He will reward us abundantly. ■

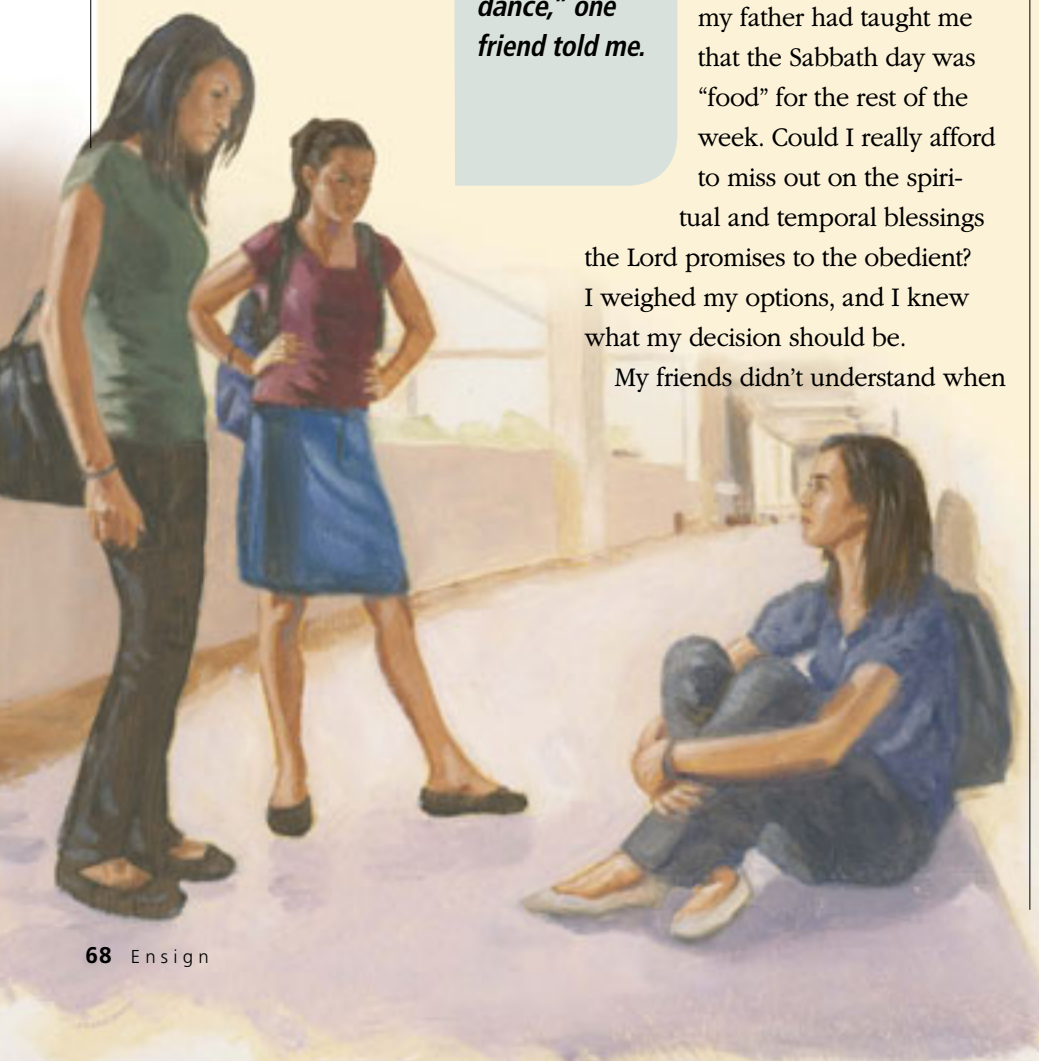
Sonola Oladapo Solomon, Lagos, Nigeria



FOOD FOR THE REST OF THE WEEK

As high school graduation approached, my friends and I eagerly anticipated our graduation dance. But when our school announced the date of the dance, I was devastated to learn that it was going to be on a Sunday.

"Mariela, this happens once in a lifetime!" one friend told me. "You should just go. You'll never have to miss church again. But this once, you should skip church and go to the dance."



"This once, you should skip church and go to the dance," one friend told me.

I explained to her that it wasn't just about missing church—it was about giving a day to the Lord. But as I thought about what she said, I wondered, "Would it really matter if I didn't observe the Sabbath, just this once?" After all, my friends and I were soon going our separate ways, and we had looked forward to this event for years. The dance would offer us one last chance to celebrate together.

As I thought about my decision, I remembered that my father had taught me that the Sabbath day was "food" for the rest of the week. Could I really afford to miss out on the spiritual and temporal blessings the Lord promises to the obedient? I weighed my options, and I knew what my decision should be.

My friends didn't understand when I told them about my decision not to go. Over the next several weeks, I felt disappointed every time I heard one of them talking about the dance, but I knew my choice was right.

As the dance approached, something unexpected happened. For some reason the school decided to change the date. Instead of being held on a Sunday evening, the dance would be held on a Saturday evening! I was so excited to be able to go after all and have a wonderful time with my friends. What made me feel especially happy was knowing that I had honored my commitment to obey the Lord.

I am grateful that I was able to attend the dance, but I realize that we're not always blessed in this way. Sometimes we are required to make significant sacrifices for the gospel of Jesus Christ. But I learned then, and I know now, that a loving Heavenly Father always blesses us one way or another when we obey.

Establishing a pattern of obedience in high school brings me great blessings as a young adult. My schedule gets very busy with college assignments, work commitments, and social activities, but I know I have a chance to rest from those labors each week by devoting Sunday to the Lord.

My father was right: Sunday is a great source of spiritual food. Keeping the Sabbath will always be a priority for me so I can renew my covenants, refill spiritual reservoirs, and refresh my mind for the coming week. ■

Mariela Torres Meza, San José, Costa Rica

MY GARDEN DREAM



Growing up in a faithful, active Latter-day Saint family, I never thought that one day a child of mine would leave the Church.

My husband and I had married in the temple and eventually had seven children. We did everything we could to obey the counsel of the prophets. We taught our children the gospel, shared our testimonies with them, attended Sunday meetings together, held family home evening, prayed daily both morning and night, and read scriptures as a family. None of our actions, however, prevented our son from leaving the Church.

In my sorrow I turned to the Lord for strength and came to understand more clearly the role of agency in our lives. Still I wondered, "What more can I do? Certainly there is something I can do to bring him back to the truth." I prayed for our son, but I felt I wasn't doing enough. Certainly, if I had enough faith, wouldn't he change?

Such thoughts ran through my mind as I went to sleep one night. Heavenly Father saw fit to answer my questions through a dream. It was a simple dream, but for me its meaning was profound.

In my dream I was standing in the middle of my vegetable garden. I had planted and watered the seeds, but the plants had not begun to grow. In my dream I told my plants to grow. I nagged them to grow! Then I began to laugh at myself. The very idea of trying to get my plants to grow by telling them to do so was absurd.

I told my plants to grow. I nagged them to grow! Then I began to laugh at myself.

Then I awoke. I immediately understood my dream's meaning. My son was the seed I was trying to get to grow. But just as I could not make the garden seeds grow, I cannot make my son change. Inherent in each seed of my garden is a God-given ability to grow, and it is God who directs the growth of each seed. Likewise, my son has the ability to grow because he is a spirit son of Heavenly Father. But if growth and change are to occur in his life, they will result from his agency coupled with God's power.

In my dream garden, I planted the seeds, watered the garden, pulled out offending weeds, and sought in every way to nourish my seeds. Likewise, in my role as a mother I plant seeds in the lives of my children. With Heavenly Father's help, I teach them, try to be an example for them, share my testimony with them, and love them, doing all in my power to be an instrument for good in their lives. Then I must wait. In due time the Master Gardener will help the seeds to grow.

In the meantime He helps me to wait with patience. He fills my heart with hope. He reminds me that I am doing all that He requires of me. He gives me daily evidence of His love. In every way I need, He supports me.

So I will wait, pray, trust in His promises, and continue to plant seeds. The harvest will come. ■

Name withheld

Small & **Simple** Things

"By small and simple things are great things brought to pass" (Alma 37:6).

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING CHILDREN

- Greet each child by name as he or she comes into class.
- Let children participate in lessons by inviting them to hold visual aids, choose a song, answer questions, or role-play a story.
- Use simple and clear language.
- Become familiar enough with the lesson that you can "tell" it to the children rather than read it from the manual.
- Remember that children will follow your example. Try to set a righteous example in the way you treat them and others.



LEFT: PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTINA SMITH; PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN LUKE; RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH OF TEMPLE BY MATTHEW REIER; PHOTOGRAPH OF *CHRISTUS* BY MATTHEW REIER

ON THE CALENDAR

General Conference

Don't forget: the general Young Women meeting will be held on March 27, and general conference will be held on April 3 and 4.



What is general conference? It is a worldwide meeting of the Church, held twice a year—on the first weekend of April and October. Instead of attending regular Church meetings on Sunday, members gather to receive counsel from the prophet, his counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and other Church leaders.

General conference originates in Salt Lake City, Utah, and is delivered in four two-hour sessions for all members and one two-hour session for priesthood holders. Some Church members attend conference in the 21,000-seat Conference Center, but most receive it through a broadcast. Some areas can watch general conference live. Other areas will receive video or audio recordings of conference within a short time following the original broadcasts. Check with your priesthood leader or at www.conference.lds.org for information about broadcast times and locations.

Following the conference, you can read and study general conference messages in the May and November issues of the *Liahona*.

The general Young Women meeting—a Churchwide meeting for young women ages 12 to 18, their mothers, and Young Women leaders—is held each year in March, and the general Relief Society meeting is held in September. These two meetings are broadcast on Saturday evening the week before general conference.

TEMPLE SPOTLIGHT

São Paulo Brazil Temple



Dedicated in 1978 by President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), the São Paulo Brazil Temple was the first temple built in South America. It was financed in part by the contributions of local members, many of whom did not have money to give. Instead they offered wedding rings, bracelets, medals, and other valuable personal objects.

The temple is a modern, single-spire design. Its foundations are strong enough to sustain another 13 stories, making the structure virtually earthquake proof. The exterior was constructed of reinforced concrete faced with cast stone composed of quartz and marble aggregates. There are 3,000 exterior panels of 400 different sizes and shapes, fit perfectly in specific places on the temple walls because the space between panels could be no more than one millimeter.

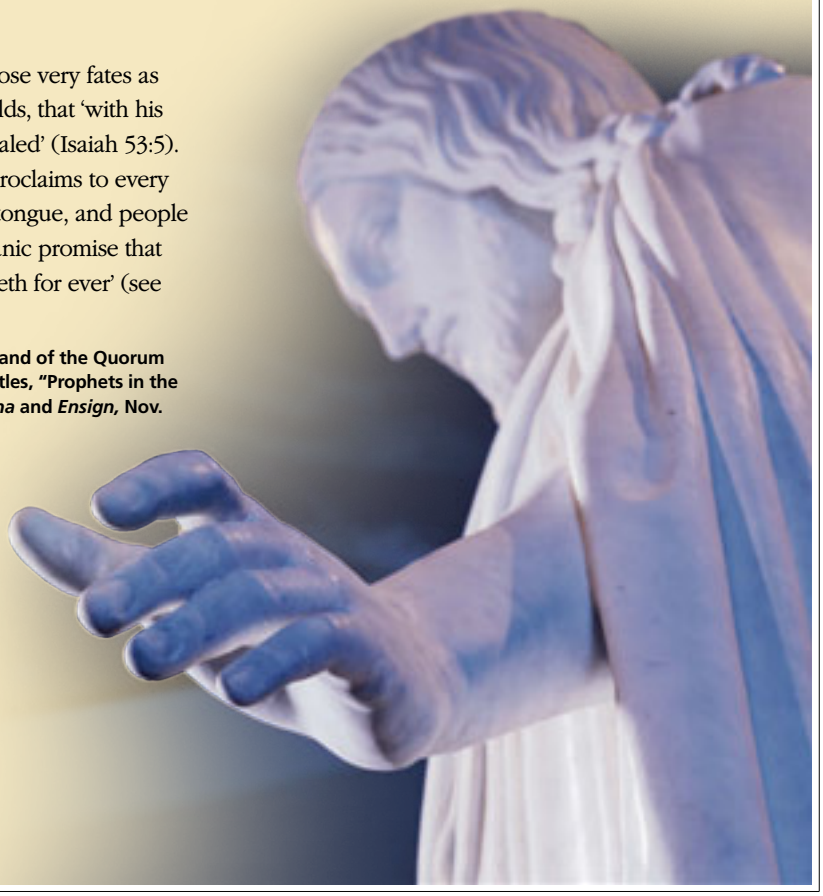
In 2004 the temple was rededicated following renovations, which included placing a figure of the angel Moroni atop the previously unadorned spire.

THE MESSAGE OF GENERAL CONFERENCE



A general conference of the Church is a declaration to all the world that Jesus is the Christ, that He and His Father, the God and Father of us all, appeared to the boy prophet Joseph Smith in fulfillment of that ancient promise that the resurrected Jesus of Nazareth would again restore His Church on earth and again come in like manner as [those Judean Saints had] seen him [ascend] into heaven' (Acts 1:11). . . . Conference . . . is a declaration that He condescended to come to earth in poverty and humility, to face sorrow and rejection, disappointment and death in order that we might be saved from those very fates as our eternity unfolds, that 'with his stripes we are healed' (Isaiah 53:5). . . . Conference proclaims to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people the loving Messianic promise that 'his mercy endureth for ever' (see Psalm 136:1)."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Prophets in the Land Again," *Liahona* and *Ensign,* Nov. 2006, 106.



A MOMENT IN TIME

The Early Relief Society

In 1842 a small group of women in Nauvoo, Illinois, gathered to form a sewing society to provide clothes for the temple workers. However, as the Prophet Joseph Smith counseled them, their responsibilities would be "not only to relieve the poor, but to save souls."[1] Thus Relief Society was born.



Joseph Smith formally organized the Relief Society on March 17, 1842. His wife, Emma, was its first president.

The sisters quickly set to work helping the needy. New settlers, including immigrants, often needed food, shelter, and clothing when they arrived. Many also suffered physical hardships, illness, and the deaths of family members.

By the summer of 1842, the Relief Society organization had grown so large that no building in Nauvoo could accommodate its numbers. The sisters chose instead to meet in a grove near the temple site. During the winter of 1842–43, they postponed their meetings, but sisters of the "necessity committee," a forerunner of visiting teaching, still visited one another.

NOTE

1. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church,* 5:25.

GREAT LIVES REMEMBERED

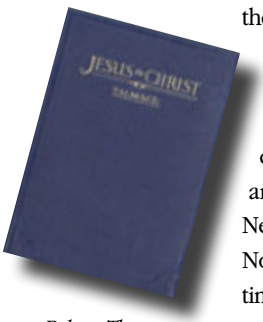
James E. Talmage (1862–1933)



James Edward Talmage was 13 years old when his family emigrated from their native England and settled in Provo, Utah.

Intelligent and thirsty for knowledge, James was a part-time member of the faculty of the Brigham Young Academy in Provo, Utah, by the time he was 17. He went on to study chemistry and geology at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania and at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. Membership in many prominent scientific societies gave James Talmage access to important people and publications and helped him combat much of the prejudice faced by Latter-day Saints at the time.

In 1888 he married Mary May Booth. They became the parents of eight children. From 1894 to 1897 he was president of the University of Deseret in Salt Lake City (now the University of Utah). During that time he bought one of the popular new chain-driven bicycles and rode it often. One evening he arrived home an hour late for dinner, bruised, bloodied, and dirty. Near his home was a single-plank bridge across a ditch. Normally, he dismounted and crossed on foot. But this time he felt he could ride across. He kept at it, crash after crash, until he mastered the maneuver.



Below: The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1921. Elder Talmage is on the back row, second from the left.

Elder Talmage was an effective lecturer, and some of his talks and lessons became the basis of some of the books for which he is well-known, including *The Articles of Faith*. Prior to his call to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1911, the First Presidency had asked him to write a book on the life and ministry of the Savior. Later, a room was set aside in the Salt Lake Temple where Elder Talmage could concentrate on his writing. His 700-page book, *Jesus the Christ,* was published in 1915 and has been reprinted several times since then. ■



EMMA SMITH, BY ROBERT T. BARRETT, MAY NOT BE COPIED; PHOTOGRAPH OF BOOK COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY LIBRARY

Family Banner

Our family was inspired by Elder M. Russell Ballard's talk in the October 2005 general conference. He called on families to make "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" like a banner in their homes.[1] We decided to take his admonition literally. On a piece of fabric, we wrote with a permanent marker: "Successful families are established . . . on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities."[2] We tied the banner to a pole and everyone signed the fabric.

Now the banner is a regular part of our family home evenings. Our sons enjoy taking turns holding the banner high as we recite our family theme. Sometimes we even march around the room if our flag bearer is especially energetic. Having the banner routine has added feelings of joy and unity to our family home evenings. Every week we're reminded of the true principles our family strives to achieve.

Rena Phung, Hawaii, USA



ILLUSTRATION BY BETH WHITTAKER

NOTES

1. See "What Matters Most Is What Lasts Longest," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 42.
2. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.

HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

"Learning through Life's Trials," on page 27. After the lesson, you may want to invite family members to share experiences when a trial has blessed their life. You could conclude by discussing with family members what they can do next time they are faced with a challenge.



The trials of this life will ultimately lead to joy if we patiently trust in God's plan and discover how to use adversity to grow stronger.

LEARNING THROUGH Life's Trials

By Larry Richman

I've learned that the way I respond to trials can have a great effect on whether they become roadblocks in my life or expressways to learning and growth. When I anguish over difficulties, the experiences only serve to weigh me down. But remembering that these trials are part of the great plan of happiness helps me to see them as opportunities to grow and learn.

As children of a loving God, we accepted our Father's plan to obtain a physical body, gain earthly experience, and qualify to return to His presence and enjoy eternal life. In fact, we "shouted for joy" at the chance to participate in this "plan of happiness" (Alma 42:8, 16). Here on earth, there is a lot of joy, but there are also times of trial, misfortune, and grief.

A common misunderstanding among members of the Church is that if we strive with all our might to live the commandments, nothing bad will happen to us. We may believe if we are married in the temple, our marriage will automatically be heaven on earth, or if we live the Word of Wisdom, we will never get sick. But the truth is that bad things may happen to the best of people. The consequences of good and bad actions will come, but they do not always come immediately, and they may not even come in this life.

March 2010 27

"The Law of the Fast," on page 52. Consider making a family plan for the next fast Sunday. Decide when the family will pray to begin and end the fast. Discuss what you might fast for and how you are blessed by sharing your testimonies during the fast. If a family member cannot go without food or water, discuss other ways he or she can participate.

"The Value of Experiencing and Expressing Gratitude," on page 44. As part of the lesson, consider starting a family gratitude journal. For example, before family prayers each night you could have each person share one thing from the day that they are grateful for and list these things in your journal. At the end of an appointed time period, such as a year, review the blessings your family has received.



THE VALUE OF EXPERIENCING AND EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

By Vaughn E. Worthen, Ph.D.

Associate Director Counseling and Career Center Brigham Young University

Sixteen-year-old Louisa Mellor Clark was the oldest living child of James and Mary Ann Mellor, who crossed the plains in the Martin handcart company. Louisa recorded the following incident in her journal:

"The first snowstorm left about two feet of snow on the ground, and we began to feel very nervous. We had to wade through more streams, and sometimes up to our waists, and when we got through our clothes would freeze on us until a great many gave up and many died, mostly old people. At last the snow got to be four and five feet deep and often we had to shovel a road before we could move. Thus our traveling was very slow and our provisions nearly gone out.

"My mother, still being weak, finally gave up and said she could go no further. The company could not wait for her, so she bade my father goodbye and kissed each one of the children Godspeed. Then my mother sat down on a boulder and wept. I told my sister, Elizabeth, to take good care of the twins and the rest of the family, and that I would stay with mother. I wore a few yards away and prayed with faith that God would help us, that He would protect us from wolves, and that He would let us reach camp. As I was going back to where my mother was sitting I found a pie in the road. I picked it up and gave it to mother to eat. After resting awhile we started on our journey, *thanking God for the blessings*. A few miles before we reached camp we met my father coming out to meet us. We arrived in camp at 10:00 p.m.

"Many times after that mother felt like giving up and quitting, but then she would remember how wonderful the Lord had been to spare her so many times, and offered a prayer of gratitude instead. So she went on her way rejoicing while walking the blood-stained path of snow."[1]

Mary Ann Mellor's expressions of gratitude were not based simply on finding a life-sustaining pie but on the recognition that God cared about her and her family and provided for them. That recognition gave her a deep sense of God's grace, and her gratitude became a daily expression of faith in Him.

Gratitude is receiving significant attention in the emerging field of positive psychology. As a licensed psychologist, I have extensively researched the use of gratitude interventions in promoting well-being. I find that introducing these interventions into counseling at appropriate times is helpful in treating depression, reducing anxiety, and introducing a more positive focus to troubled relationships. Experiencing and expressing gratitude can help all of us—whatever our situation—lead fuller, richer lives.

What Is Gratitude?

Gratitude is a positive *experience* that comes from recognizing gifts or blessings and feeling thankful. It is also an *attitude*, a way of perceiving life, in which individuals are willing to receive and acknowledge the beneficial actions of others on their behalf. Those who consistently display such an attitude are said to have a grateful *disposition*. Gratitude is also a *habit* that can be cultivated, causing one to focus on the blessings of life. Finally, gratitude can be defined as a coping *response* to challenging or difficult circumstances.

Gratitude can have a profound effect on perspective, completely determining or altering the way we look at an experience. Two weeks after being called as a bishop, I underwent foot surgery. I spent the next year and a half on crutches before I completely recovered. When I became

To pioneer Mary Ann Mellor, a life-sustaining pie was more than an answer to prayer. It was the realization that God cared about her and her family, and gave her a sense of gratitude for His grace.

180 Years Later, Book of Mormon Nears 150 Million Copies

By Ryan Kunz
Church Magazines

As the 180th anniversary of the publication of the Book of Mormon approaches in March, the sacred volume of scripture approaches another milestone: the printing of its 150 millionth copy.

The first copies of the Book of Mormon appeared on the shelves of E. B. Grandin's bookstore on March 26, 1830. The initial printing totaled 5,000 copies. Between 1830 and 1987, more than 39 million copies were printed.

In 1988 President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) said, "The time is long overdue for a massive flooding of the earth with the Book of Mormon" ("Flooding the Earth with the Book of Mormon," *Ensign,* Nov. 1988, 4).

By 1990 the 50 millionth copy had been printed for distribution by members and missionaries. That number doubled by 2000, with the Church printing an average of one copy every seven seconds over the decade—a rate the Church has sustained to reach the projected 150 million by the end of 2010. The majority of the printing is done in Salt Lake City, USA, but presses in Brazil, Germany, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan are also used.



The Book of Mormon has been printed in its entirety in 82 languages.

A Powerful Influence

One of the many reasons President Benson gave for filling the earth with the Book of Mormon was its righteous influence. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught early Church leaders that "a man would get nearer

to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book" (*History of the Church,* 4:461).

Since that time the book's influence has been recognized by many. In 2003 *Book* magazine named the Book of Mormon one of the "20 Books That Changed America," ranking it with such titles as Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* and John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*.

In August 2005 President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) promised members who read the Book of Mormon that "there will come into your lives and into your homes an added measure of the Spirit of the Lord, a strengthened resolution to walk in obedience to His commandments, and a stronger testimony of the living reality of the Son of God" ("A Testimony Vibrant and True," *Liahona,* Aug. 2005, 2).

In October 2007 he said of the book: "Through all of these years critics have tried to explain it. They have spoken against it. They have ridiculed it. But it has outlived them all, and its influence today is greater than at any time in its history" ("The Stone Cut Out of the Mountain," *Liahona,* Nov. 2007, 83).

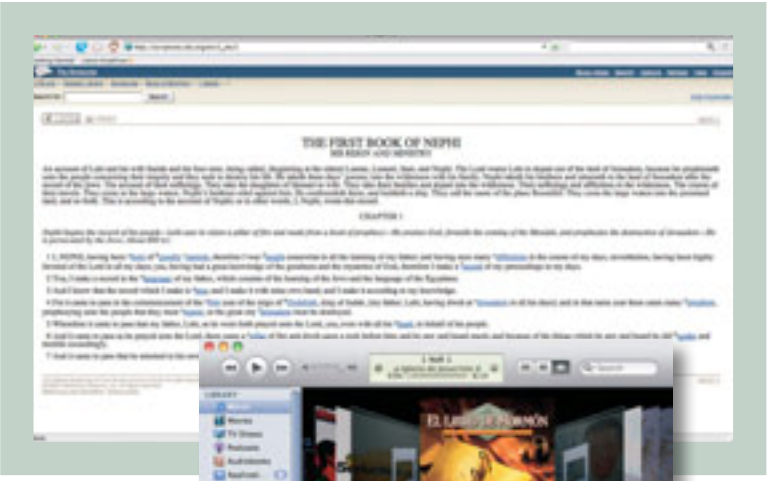
The Work of Translation

That influence is due in part to the number of languages in which the book is flooding the earth.

The Book of Mormon has been published in its entirety in 82 languages, with selections of the book available in an additional 25. The first edition of the Book of Mormon after English was Danish in 1851, followed by French, Italian, Welsh, and German in 1852.

Additional languages are currently being produced. Translations completed in recent years include Guarani, a language spoken in Paraguay; Sinhala, spoken in Sri Lanka; Yoruba, a West African language; and Serbian, spoken in southeastern Europe.

Mojca Zeleznikar joined the Church before



In addition to the print edition, the Book of Mormon is available in multiple digital formats.

the Book of Mormon was available in her native language of Slovenian. Her testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel came by listening to the missionaries and studying the Book of Mormon in Croatian and English.

A few years after Sister Zeleznikar was baptized, the Book of Mormon was translated into Slovenian. When she read the translated text, she felt the full power of the words. "I felt the truth expand before me in clear simplicity and profound purity," she recalled. "The voice of my Creator [spoke] to me in my own language—the language that my mother spoke to me."

Flooding the Earth

In addition to the increasing number of translations available, the Church is also making use of advancing technologies to flood the earth with the Book of Mormon in different formats.

President Benson said, "In this age of electronic media and mass distribution of the printed word, God will hold us accountable if we do not now move the Book of Mormon in a monumental way" ("Flooding the Earth," 4).

Audio recordings of the Book of Mormon in English, Portuguese, and Spanish are available at www.audio.lds.org, with other languages to come in 2010. The electronic text of the Book of Mormon is currently available in 16 languages at

www.scriptures.lds.org (click on **English** for a list of languages); more than 600,000 people use the online edition of the scriptures each month.

The entire standard works and study helps can also be found in multiple languages on the CD-ROM *The Scriptures: Electronic Study Edition,* available through local distribution centers. A new DVD-ROM edition with another 20 languages will be released late this year.

The Church is also producing official scripture applications for mobile devices that will be available in 2010 in English, with other languages to follow.

The results of sharing the Book of Mormon are unmistakable. This keystone and additional testament of Jesus Christ helps hundreds of thousands of new converts each year come to know and accept the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. With more copies of the Book of Mormon available in more languages and more formats and with more missionaries and members to distribute it, the Book of Mormon and its influence continue to spread.

However, with billions of people yet to reach, the urgency President Benson felt to publish and distribute the book in 1988 remains today.

"We have the Book of Mormon," he said. "We have the members, we have the missionaries, and the world has the need. The time is now!" ("Flooding the Earth," 4). ■

New Guidelines
Blessing Relief Society

Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president, announced new guidelines for Relief Society meetings nearly six months ago at the general Relief Society meeting, and the results are blessing the lives of sisters around the world.

The reception of the new guidelines has been generally warm, said Sister Beck, pointing out that members worldwide can now design meetings according to their individual needs, allowing more flexibility in a church that isn't confined to one culture or locale.

"This has been a very positive step for a global organization," Sister Beck said. "We love the sisters, we trust the sisters, and we know that if they make this a matter of faith and obedience, they won't have any problem with it."

Sister Beck's address, entitled "Relief Society: A Sacred Work" (*Liahona,* Nov. 2009, 110) should serve as the official policy regarding meetings, and Relief Society leaders with questions about the policies should counsel with their priesthood leaders.

General Changes

It was affirmed that Relief Society counselors should follow the pattern of the priesthood and be called the first or second counselor. The calling previously known as the home, family, and personal enrichment leader should be called the Relief Society meeting coordinator. The sister in this calling should continue to arrange Relief Society meetings held on weekdays under the direction of the presidency.

Relief Society Meeting Guidelines

In her address, Sister Beck told how the meetings formerly called "home, family and personal enrichment" would now simply be called Relief Society meetings.

Sister Beck described how the ward Relief Society president should oversee all Relief Society meetings and counsel with the bishop or branch president, who approves all meeting plans.

The Relief Society president should oversee the meetings, but may ask the first or second counselor—or recommend a sister in the ward or branch be called—to be coordinator of the meetings. At least one member of the presidency should be present at all meetings.

Meetings generally should be held monthly, but at least quarterly, at a time other than Sunday or Monday evening. The bishop or branch president and the Relief Society president determine the frequency of the meetings, and sisters should not be made to feel it is mandatory to attend all these meetings.

When planning meetings, the Relief Society presidency should consider such issues as time commitment, cost, safety, and travel distance.

Meetings should accomplish the "charitable and practical responsibilities" of Relief Society, increasing faith and personal righteousness and seeing to the spiritual and temporal needs of individuals and families.

In planning meetings the Relief Society presidency should give priority to topics that fulfill Relief Society purposes; meetings can focus on one topic or be divided into more than one class or activity. Teachers should generally be members of the ward or stake.

"Using Relief Society meetings appropriately will increase the ability of the Relief Society to work in powerful ways with priesthood leaders in every ward," Sister Beck said. ■

Annual Pageants
Begin with Mesa



PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM SMART, *DESERET NEWS*

Each year the Church sponsors five pageants across the United States. Information about each pageant is included here.

Mesa Arizona Pageant

The Mesa Arizona Pageant, *Jesus the Christ,* retells the story of Jesus Christ's birth, ministry, selfless death, and miraculous Resurrection. The show runs March 24 to April 3. See www.easterpageant.org for more information.

Manti Utah Pageant

Manti Utah's *The Mormon Miracle Pageant* intertwines the stories of the Restoration of the gospel, the witness of the Book of Mormon, and the journey of the faithful pioneers to the Sanpete Valley. The show runs June 17 to 26. See www.mormonmiracle.org for more information.

Nauvoo Illinois Pageant

The Nauvoo Illinois Pageant, *A Tribute to Joseph Smith,* celebrates the restored gospel, the prophetic mission of Joseph Smith, and the legacy of early Latter-day Saints in Nauvoo. The show runs July 6 to July 31. See www.nauvoopageant.org for more information.

Hill Cumorah New York Pageant

The Hill Cumorah New York Pageant, *America's Witness for Christ,* retells the Book of Mormon story, including the trials of Lehi's family and his descendants, the climactic visit of Jesus Christ to the Americas, and Joseph Smith's discovery of the plates. The show runs July 9 to 17. See www.hillcumorah.org for more information.

Castle Valley Utah Pageant

The Castle Valley Utah Pageant is an elaborate outdoor historical drama that portrays the settling of a pioneer village in Castle Dale, Utah. The show runs July 29 to August 7. For more information, call 1-435-687-2403. The Castle Valley Pageant alternates every other year with the Clarkston Pageant, *Martin Harris: The Man Who Knew,* in Clarkston, Utah. ■

Dates Set for New Temple in Arizona

The First Presidency has announced the dates for the public open house and dedication of The Gila Valley Arizona Temple.

Construction of the temple was first announced in April 2008. It will be the third temple in the state of Arizona in the United States.

The public is invited to attend an open house from April 23, 2010, through May 15, 2010, excluding Sundays. A cultural celebration of music and dance will be held prior to the dedication on May 22, 2010. Three dedicatory sessions will follow on May 23, 2010.

The temple will serve nearly 20,000 Latter-day Saints living in southeast Arizona and southwest New Mexico.

Cebu Temple Dedication Dates Announced

The First Presidency has announced open house and dedicatory dates for the Cebu City Philippines Temple.

The Cebu City temple will be open to the public from May 21, 2010, through June 5, 2010, excluding Sundays. A cultural celebration with music and dance will follow on June 12.

The dedication of the temple will be held June 13, 2010, with three dedicatory sessions broadcast throughout the Philippines. The temple will be open for temple work on June 14, 2010.

The new temple, first announced on April 18, 2006, is the second temple located in the Philippines and will be the 133rd operating temple in the world. ■

WORLD BRIEFS

Church Ad Honored

A Washington, D.C.-based advertising and marketing firm has honored a public service



announcement produced by the Church. "Swashbucklers," a short spot on the importance of fatherhood, was recognized for its relevance, high production quality, and exceptional combination of excitement, humor, and warmth, according to the National Media Survey. The spot is part of the Homefront series. It can be viewed at the Mormon Messages YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/mormonmessages. Search "swashbuckler."

Scriptures Now Online in Chinese and Korean

Two new editions of the LDS scriptures are now online. Korean was launched in October 2009 at scriptures.lds.org/ko, and the Chinese (traditonal characters) version followed in December at scriptures.lds.org/ch. The sites contain the text of the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, and Guide to the Scriptures, an alphabetical listing of gospel topics. Japanese, Cebuano, and Tagalog editions are scheduled to be published online in 2010.

Council Recognizes Disabilities Web Site

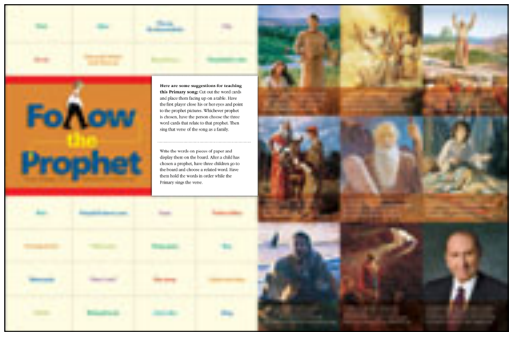
The Autism Council of Utah presented the Church with its 2009 Outstanding Organization of the Year award in recognition of the Church's Disabilities Resources Web site. The site offers resources for people with disabilities—such as those with hearing loss, blindness, speech disorders, learning disabilities and more—and their caregivers, families, and Church leaders. The site can be found at www.disabilities.lds.org. ■

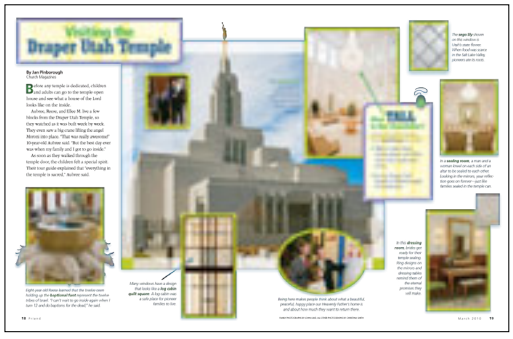
In **Other** Church **Magazines**

THE FRIEND

Follow the Prophet

Ever notice how Primary children usually sing the chorus of "Follow the Prophet" louder than the verses? If your children have a hard time remembering the words to this song, see pages 24 and 25. Here you will find ideas to help you teach children the words to the song.





Temple Open Houses

Thousands of children have been able to attend a temple open house. Those children who have not yet had this opportunity can learn more about what an open house is like by reading pages 18 and 19.

THE NEW ERA

Dealing with Bullies

A young boy tells about getting the best of a bully by turning her into a friend. Read "Getting the Best of the Bully," by Douglas M. Brown, on page 38.





Getting Answers

Get some straight-forward answers about the difference between fasting and going without food plus understanding why people are anointed with oil when receiving a priesthood blessing. Read "To the Point," on page 40.

COMMENTS

Thanks for article

I deeply appreciate the article you published entitled "What I Can do for Leigh." The feelings expressed are the exact feelings and emotions I have for my beautiful, talented, caring daughter. So many articles written on this subject have left me comfortless. The thoughts expressed in this article are Christlike—for we are taught Christ is no respecter of persons.

I hope this message encourages families to extend unconditional love to all of their children.

Name withheld

Nutrition warning

I read with interest the article "Adequate Nutrition During an Emergency." As a grandmother with two grandchildren with peanut allergies, I was concerned about the following statement: "If you have peanut allergies, you could substitute it [peanut butter] with another nut butter or small bag of nuts." Many people who are allergic to peanuts also have allergies to tree nuts and some seeds such as sesame seeds and poppy seeds. Before substituting another nut or nut butter for peanut butter, people should know if they have allergies to tree nuts as well. This could prevent serious problems that might occur.

Sister Judy Brewster
Nebraska Omaha Mission

Picturing Fatherhood

By Antonio Peluso



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY RUTH SIPUS

Seeing the two bicycling figures wasn't unusual, but this Sunday their simple image reminded me of the past and gave me confidence in the future.

It was Sunday, and my family and I were attending the dedication services of a newly remodeled meetinghouse in our area. Just a few minutes before sacrament meeting, the stake president asked me to please drive to our ward building, three kilometers away, to retrieve an item he needed. I had just enough time to get there and back. While completing that simple errand, I had an experience that touched me spiritually—a wonderful reminder of what is important.

With just a few blocks left to go to return to the meeting, I saw ahead of me two bicycles, one large and the other quite a bit smaller, each being ridden very energetically. I recognized the cyclists at once. They were two people I knew well, a good brother from my ward and his young son. They were riding to church—just as they did every Sunday.

As I watched them, there came to my mind an image out of the future, when that boy—and his father too—will remember those bicycle rides. I thought, "What a great example this father is setting and what an eternal influence he is going to have on the precious son God has given him. That boy," I reflected, "may grow up to cherish that experience, and perhaps he will repeat it when he becomes a father himself."

As I caught up to them, there sprang to mind an image of my childhood memories of my own father, who used to carry me on the handlebar of his bicycle. The close relationship that develops from these kinds of experiences is a pleasure to have and tender to remember.

When I got to church, I greeted the bicycle riders with a smile and received the same in return as they expressed silent happiness to be attending church. At priesthood meeting that afternoon, I had a chance to express to this brother how impressed I had been with the picture of righteous fatherhood I had seen earlier. His face brightened, and perhaps he was surprised because what I described was such a common occurrence for him.

As Latter-day Saints, we are fortunate to see a picture of many fathers like this one who promote their children's spiritual and emotional welfare. And as children blessed with such parents, we can feel heartfelt gratitude for their simple yet profound examples and sacrifices. ■



Cold Missouri Night, **by Joseph Brickey**

"And blessed are all they who are persecuted for my name's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
"And blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake;
"For ye shall have great joy and be exceedingly glad, for great shall be your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you" (3 Nephi 12:10–12).



Joseph and the Boy Jesus,
by Leroy Transfield,
terra-cotta sculpture.

Of his work, the artist says, "Even though this piece depicts the relationship between Joseph and Jesus, it also reflects the father and son kinship hoped for in all such family bonds." For more art from the Eighth International Art Competition, see "Remembering the Great Things of God," LDS.org/churchhistory/museum.

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